Soldiers and Society in Late Roman Belgica

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores military identity in late Roman Belgica II. It examines the central idea of a gradual blurring of lines between soldiers and civilians which is often identified as as a distinctive feature of the late Empire. This is mediated through two scholarly paradigms: integration and militarisation. According to these, late Roman society was dominated by the military in cultural terms as well as through domination of the social and economic networks of ordinary life: i.e. the cities and countryside. This study seeks to refine this view through an examination of the province of Belgica II. This province would appear to be an extreme example of the militarisation process, but a closer study will reveal a more nuanced picture. This study uses the idea of identity and the sociological concepts of constructed and complex identities to explore the dynamic nature of military identity and argue that the late Roman period should be taken on its own terms, rather than being compared with an idealised past. The study uses archaeological and historical material, but adopts a post-processualist approach, where relevant, with the material evidence in an attempt to get away from older scholarly ideas such as, “Germanisation,” which often obscures our understanding. A survey of the literary record from Gaul on military identity is followed by an examination of military identities in Belgica II through the remnants of its soldiers, forts, cities, countryside and finally a brief survey of the changing world of the 5th century. Cemetery evidence is used occasionally to deepen the analysis, where appropriate. It is concluded that the terms of the debate are probably too crude and underplay the importance of the long-term changes in northern Gaul as drivers of social and economic change.
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Acknowledgements

Profoundest thanks go to Andrew Fear and Paul Fouracre for their patience and good humour over the years. It was their persistence that ensured something of the work over the last few years saw the light of day. If ever a hagiography needed to be written it would to them.

Thanks also go to Alain Jacques, Didier Bayard, Frédéric Lemaire, Raymond Brulet and Sophie Vanhoutte for help with queries on the intricacies of Gallic archaeology. Cathy King at the Ashmolean Museum provided some valuable help on 3rd century coinage of Amandus.

Thanks must also go to Manchester Grammar School for financial support and to my colleagues in the History Department, past and present, for their toleration of the time I have dedicated to a topic they mostly found perversely arcane. Given that I spend some of my professional life dealing with the soldiers who lie in the well maintained cemeteries in northern France, casualties of the war fought a century ago, there is some perspective to be gained spending time studying their professional ancestors.

Many thanks go to Rachel Hatton for proof reading; to Thomas Hern and Paul Hern for their help with bibliography. James Hern, Linda Hern and Rachel Hern should also be thanked for their help. Most of my gratitude goes to my wife, Anne, and our sons Felix and Rufus, who have suffered the most from this whole process through my absences in the library.
Belgica in the Late Roman Period

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1 Adapted from R. Brulet, *La Gaule Septentrionale au Bas-Empire* (Trier, 1990)
Introduction

The traditional narrative of the Roman Empire draws a sharp contrast between how it functioned during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{2} From the narrow perspective of this study, a crucial quality often identified about the earlier period of the Roman Empire was its ability to maintain a clear distinction between the military and civilian spheres of society, most dramatically in the Augustan military marriage prohibitions.\textsuperscript{3} Not only were there legal and social distinctions but, as milites were generally stationed on the frontiers during the 1\textsuperscript{st} century AD onwards, there was a geographical separation too. In the face of the subsequent existential threats to its security during the so-called ‘3\textsuperscript{rd} century crisis’ the provinces, in both their urban and rural aspects, became increasingly dominated by military concerns which saw an increased role of the army both in terms of direct management of the physical resources of the Empire, but also by having a more direct impact on élite culture and the values of the leading social groups found in the provinces.\textsuperscript{4} This study will attempt to assess the merits of this view for the soldiers serving in the province of Belgica II during the late

\textsuperscript{2} This has its roots, of course, in the English speaking world to E. Gibbon, \textit{Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire} (London, 1776 – 1789) and followed by most subsequent historical traditions which distinguish between the early and late Roman periods e.g. early Empire/late Empire; Haut-Empire/Bas-Empire; Frühe und hohe Römische Kaiserzeit/Spätantike etc. This difference has been reflected in most modern textbooks treating the early and late Roman periods as separate topics, though with interesting differences in chronological range e.g. A. H. M. Jones, \textit{The Later Roman Empire} 284 - 602 (Oxford, 1964); S. Mitchell, \textit{A History of the Later Roman Empire AD 284 - 641} (Oxford, 2007); David S. Potter, \textit{The Roman Empire at Bay, AD 180-395} (London, 2004).

\textsuperscript{3} For a recent appraisal of the marriage issue see S. Phang, \textit{The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 BC-AD 235): Law and Family in the Imperial Army} (Leiden, 2001) and W. Schiedel, ‘Marriage, families and survival: demographic aspects’, in P. Edrkamp, ed., \textit{A Companion to the Roman Army}. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Oxford, 2007), pp. 417 – 434. Both argue that the ban reflected reality to some extent, though one that served a rhetorical and practical purpose (maximising soldierly loyalty to the state, and keeping wage demands down) rather than being something that was rigorously enforced.

\textsuperscript{4} M. Whitby, ‘Armies and Society in the Later Roman World’, in A. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins and M. Whitby, eds., \textit{Cambridge Ancient History vol. XIV Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors AD 425 - 600} (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 469 – 496. This study will take a rather skeptical attitude to the characterisation of the “Third Century” crisis especially as one defined by devastating barbarian attacks. For further discussion of the view that the whole ‘crisis’ has been overplayed see C. Wittschel, ‘Re-evaluating the Roman West in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Century’, \textit{Journal of Roman Archaeology}, 17 (2004), 251 – 281 contra the views of G. Alföldy, ‘The Crisis of the Third Century as Seen by Contemporaries’, \textit{Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies}, 15 (1974), 89 – 111. For a summary of recent views and a restatement of the word’s validity for the Roman Empire of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century see W. Liebeschuetz, ‘Was There a Crisis of the Third Century?’, in O. Hekster, G. de Kleijn, D. Slootjes, eds., \textit{Crises and the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Seventh Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Nijmegen, June 20-24, 2006)} (Leiden, 2007), pp. 11 – 22. Much of course depends on how the word ‘crisis’ is defined and used. There can be no doubting that there were significant disruptions in many parts of northern Gaul during the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, but they were the intersection of many different factors, which are still poorly understood, and focus on political and military events in such a poorly documented period is unlikely to grasp the full picture. I would place this period as best understood as part of the \textit{longue durée} of northwestern mainland rather than its \textit{histoire événementielle}. 
Roman period, and suggest the extent these ideas rely on a series of stereotypes about the Late Roman army and its predecessors.

The term “Late Roman” is defined here as the years of direct rule by a government acting (in name at least) on behalf of a recognised Roman Emperor (Augustus). For northern Gaul this is the period following the political and military problems during the second half of the 3rd century AD and lasts until the fragmentation and evaporation of imperial authority in the second half of the 5th century, and its replacement by a variety of groups who were eventually unified into a new grouping under Clovis, that that can be called the “Kingdom of the Franks” by the early 6th century. Defining the end of the period is inherently more

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5 This is arguably a disingenuous point as when defining what one means by a “recognized Roman Emperor,” the next question is necessarily – recognized by whom? In the 40 years between 383 and 423 this was a particular problem given the regular emergence of usurpers in the western half of the Empire. For an overview of these rebellions see R. Urban, Gallia Rebellis: Erhebungen in Gallien im Spiegel Antiker Zeugnisse (Stuttgart, 1999), pp. 111 – 116. There were particular problems during the reign of Honorius (395-423). He was on many occasions only able to claim a titular control over the Gallic provinces in the face of usurpers and the actions of the Visigoth. For the example of Constantine III and the confused politics around the end of the first decade of the 5th century see J.F. Drinkwater, ‘The Usurpers Constantine III (407-411) and Jovinus (411-413)’, Britannia, 29 (1998), 269-298; Honorius’ successor in the west, Valentinian III (425 – 454), fared little better in controlling policy in Gaul given the dominance of the magister militum and patrician Aetius. In the four decades following the latter’s murder in 454, and Valentinian’s death in 455, imperial control of Gaul dissipated in the face of several competing groups such as the Franks, Visigoths and provincials such as Aegidius, who exploited the political uncertainty surrounding Valentinian’s successors Avitus and Majorian. For an outline of this period see P. Heather, ‘The Western Empire 425 – 476’, in A. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins and M. Whitby, eds., Cambridge Ancient History vol. XIV Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors AD 425 - 600 (Cambridge, 2000) and S. Mitchell, A History of the Later Roman Empire AD 284-641 (Oxford, 2007), pp. 115-117. For the sake of simplicity and given that who was the legitimate holder of imperial power is somewhat tangential to this project the proposed definition will not be given further discussion.

6 There is a huge historiography on the origins of the kingdom of the Franks which is necessarily highly controversial given the paucity of source material and the part it plays in the wider debates on the move from the ‘Roman’ to the ‘Middle Ages’. This essentially revolves around the extent to which the Franks emerged as conquerors and colonisers; maintaining their ancient social and political structures as they took over northern Gaul, which many had argued was an empty landscape anyway, and those who argue for a continuity of Roman structures which incorporated the Franks. For a summary of the debate see T. F. X. Noble, ‘Introduction: Romans, Barbarians and the Transformation of the Roman Empire’, in T. F. X. Noble, ed., From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms (New York, 2006), pp. 1 – 28. The ‘Germanist’ position has long been challenged by various authors e.g. W. Goffart, Romans and Barbarians AD 418 – AD 584: Techniques of Accommodation (Princeton, 1980) and P. Geary, Before France and Germany: the creation and transformation of the Merovingian world (New York, 1988); though this had already found its way into the historiography of Frankish origins e.g. the Roman origins of the Frankish military system is already put forward by B. Bachrach, Merovingian military organization, 481-751 (Minneapolis, 1971) and for the acceptance of the importance of Roman law and economic as creating the foundations of the early Merovingian state see J. Wallace-Hadrill, The Long-Haired Kings (Toronto, 1982), pp. 1 – 9. For a measured, detached version of events that emphasizes the non-Roman influences on the emergence of Clovis, as well as the wider Roman social and political context see L. Wood, The Frankish Kingdoms (London, 1994). Development of the view that the foundations for the kingdom of Clovis were made by a long period of co-operation with Roman authorities and wider social integration into northern Gaul see E. James, The Franks (Oxford, 1988), pp. 34 – 77, developed by G. Halsall, Barbarians Migrations and the Roman West (Cambridge, 2007), p. 269; pp. 303 – 304; who argues that the Frankish kingdom emerged out of a Roman field army on the Loire.
complex than identifying its beginnings, given the fragmentary nature of the source evidence and the difficulties interpreting it. The main foundation of the study will be on the late 3rd and 4th century, with the 5th century used to provide a comparative framework.

These arguments are part of the wider intellectual tapestry of ‘Late Antiquity’ over the last few decades as scholars have sought to nuance concepts such as ‘continuity’ and ‘change’ when explaining such an important period. Older ideas of ‘decline and fall’ have been replaced by discussions of the degree of continuity and how far the Late Roman period represented a clear break from the past. Scholars now usually deploy more neutral terms such as ‘transition’ and ‘transformation’ to show a loss of confidence in the traditional narrative of violent overthrow of a decadent Roman system by outside groups. There has been subsequent reaction to this and a restatement of traditionalist views of change emphasising the ruptures of the 5th century, though the disputes on the “big story” of the ‘Fall of the Roman Empire’ do often reflect geographical fault lines, with optimists focusing on the eastern half of the Empire while pessimists tend to deal with the West. The traditional military narrative also began to shift in the 1990s when a series of books argued

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7 I. N. Wood, ‘Continuity or Calamity?: The Constraints of Literary Models’, in J.F. Drinkwater and H. Elton, eds., Fifth Century Gaul: a Crisis of Identity? (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 9-18. There is also difficulty in defining a “recognized Roman Emperor” as the next question is necessarily, recognized by whom? In the 40 years between 383 and 423 this was a real problem given the regular emergence of usurpers in the western half of the Empire, particularly during the reign of Honorius (395-423). He was on many occasions only able to claim a titular control over the Gallic provinces in the face of usurpers and the actions of the Visigoth. His successor in the west, Valentinian III, fared little better in controlling policy in Gaul given the dominance of the magister militum and patrician Aetius. In the 4 decades following the latter’s murder in 454, and Valentinian’s death in 455, Imperial control of Gaul dissipated in the face of several competing groups such as the Franks, Visigoths and provincials such as Aegidius, who exploited the political uncertainty surrounding Valentinian’s successors. For the example of Constantine III and the confused politics surrounding the end of the 5th century see J.F. Drinkwater, ‘The Usurpers Constantine III (407-411) and Jovinus (411-413)’, Britannia, 29 (1998), 269-298.


9 A good example of this approach (although very controversial) is W. Goffart, Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418-584: The Techniques of Accommodation (Toronto, 1980). For a general overview on new historiographical trends see S. Mitchell, A History of the Later Roman Empire AD 284-641 (Oxford, 2007). A particular example of this approach can be seen in the multiple volumes of the European Science Foundation ‘Transformation of the Roman World’ project carried out between 1992 and 1997 which reflected many of these approaches.

10 A pair of popular history books addressing these questions from different viewpoints were published in 2005. One focused on the social and economic consequences of the collapse of a complex society: B. Ward-Perkins, The Fall of Rome and the end of civilization (Oxford, 2005); while the other focused on the external pressures that provoked a series of crises that eventually overwhelmed the western Empire while forcing the eastern half to adapt; P. Heather, The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History (London, 2005).
for a far more positive assessment of late Roman military capability. Rather than focus on the traditional approach to military history (campaigns, strategy, tactics, equipment etc.) there is merit on exploring a less common approach: trying to examine a social history of what it meant to be a miles, and how that changed during the period under investigation in one small part of the Empire. By using the many theoretical tools that have been developed by recent scholarship to explore ‘identity’ this may give a more satisfying understanding of the process of change than a simple move from dichotomy (soldier/civilian) to convergent harmony (soldier = civilian).

It would be contrarian to argue against any fundamental changes during this period. Belgica II arguably experienced some dramatic changes during the Late Roman period. There is a strong argument that fiscal determinism was a fundamental dynamic of change. The Roman Army in the Late Antique West seems to have experienced continual reorganisation so that by the Early Medieval period military force was organised in quite a different way in the various successor states to how it had been in the Imperial period. Wickham summarises this change as a move from:

An army that was basically paid (though given land when necessary) to an army that was basically landed (though supplied when necessary or useful: on campaigns, in garrisons, or as one-off royal largesse).

This process was one of enormous importance for the social and economic organisation of provincial societies and their transformation into the period called the “Early Medieval”. A central question is how this change occurred, but also whether it was a cause or consequence of deeper changes within society and the impact of this on the various cultural aspects of those who fought for the Empire, and their identities. Did they move from being

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11 See for example H. Elton, Warfare in Roman Europe: AD 350-425 (Oxford, 1995); M. Nicasie, Twilight of Empire (Amsterdam, 1998); both specifically target the thesis of ‘barbarisation’ of the Late Roman Army and its associate, the idea that the Empire fell due to military ineffectiveness of the Roman Army brought on by its composition of mercenaries from outside the imperial frontiers as had been recently restated by J.H.W.G. Liebeschutz, Barbarians and Bishops (Oxford, 1990).

12 I. N. Wood, The Merovingian Kingdoms (London, 1994), p. 13, argues for quite rapid change as the sources show the army moved from a primarily Roman to a primarily barbarian force the period from 400 to 430.

13 C. Wickham, Framing the Early Middle Ages (Oxford, 2005), p. 60, which is a developed summary of his earlier article ‘The Other Transition: From the Ancient World to Feudalism’, in C. Wickham, Land and Power: Studies in Italian and European Social History, 400 – 1200 (London, 1994), pp. 7 – 42.
‘soldiers’ to ‘warriors’? Wickham’s formula is necessarily dichotomous, presenting two ideal types that may never have existed in totality. Its deterministic approach is also arguably too narrow and unsatisfying. Many of the debates underpinning the social position of the Roman Army are similarly oppositional and often lack empirical testing in a narrow case study, instead relying on evidence from across a broad chronological and geographical area to create a composite version of events. To move forward, this study will attempt to outline how military structures and identities evolved in one province, Belgica II, across the outlined period. A wide variety of historical information will be used, to see how far existing explanatory models are valid.

It will be argued that narratives have too often framed this subject on overly generalised ideas constructed on evidence empirically extracted from written sources that have failed to reflect the rhetorical concerns of the authors who not necessarily compatible with describing how things were in reality. The very complex and partial archaeological evidence has often been fitted into these historical models, rather than allowing different perspectives of the multiple pieces of evidence to speak for themselves. This study will attempt to argue that, while the evidence is still too fragmentary for firm conclusions, what can be described as a formal Roman military structure remained in place in Belgica II until the 5th century: longer than some suggest with its cultural impact as a distinct ‘identity’ persisting for longer. While there was inevitably a process of ‘integration’ between soldiers and local communities when units were stationed in close proximity for considerable periods of time, the crude teleological approach of MacMullen is an excessive

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14 Jorgensen argues that anthropologically those who fight can be organised into 3 groups: warriors, soldiers and conscripts. Warriors are defined as those for whom warfare is their vocation, a way of life aimed at achieving personal glory. Soldiers’ profession is warfare which entails a focus on military strategy and technical efficiency. Conscripts are ordered to war and civilians were given military training, and instilling military values were a problem. While there is a problem of using such ideal types, as these categories do overlap to some degree, it can be argued that the end of the Roman Empire moved the emphasis of military service from “soldiers and conscripts” to “warriors.” L. Jorgensen, ‘Warriors, Soldiers and Conscripts of the Anthropology in the Late Roman and Migration period Archaeology’, in B. Storgaard, ed., Military Aspects of the Aristocracy in Barbaricum in the Roman and Early Migration Periods, (Publications from the National Museum. Studies in Archaeology and History 5) (Copenhagen, 2001), pp. 9-19.


16 There are several good recent examples of this approach on Roman Britain, though they do take a specifically archaeological approach: A. Gardner, An Archaeology of Identity: Soldiers and Society in Late Roman Britain (Oxford, 2007) and R. Collins, Hadrian’s Wall and the End of Empire: the Roman Frontier in the 4th and 5th centuries (London, 2012).
Finally it will be argued that the oft-used theme of the “militarisation” of late Roman society has been overdone, as it generalises the complex changes in northern Gaul which have quite specific chronological and regional variations. Even in a province which appears to present these developments in such stark terms as Belgica II, such a term will be argued to be insufficient to explain the complex transformations that occurred. Institutional transformation whereby traditional principles adapted to new political and social realities was a key element of the entire history of the Roman Empire, and from this perspective, the “late Roman army” remained part of that continuum for longer than we often think.

1.2 The Historiography of Soldiers and Society in the Later Roman Empire

The relationship between the Roman army and wider society in the later Roman Empire has been dealt with in three main paradigms: military identity, integration and militarisation.

1.2.1 Military identity

Given increasing disillusion with older explanatory frameworks for change such as ‘Romanisation’ and ‘Christianisation’ scholars have increasingly become attached to ‘identity’ as a means of explaining the complex interaction of individuals with the cultural power of the Roman state and imperial society. There are two main threads to such a

17 “Civilian turned soldier, soldier turned civilian in a rapprochement to a middle ground of waste and confusion. By the process each influenced the other, but one direction of influence, the militarization of civilians, was particularly significant and did much to change society.” R. MacMullen, *Soldiers and Civilians in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), p. 152.


19 There is an enormous body of literature exploring these issues e.g. R. Miles, ed., *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (London, 1999). Most of this is concerned with religious identity, which is no surprise given the cultural and social history popular since the publication of P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150 – AD 750: from Marcus Aurelius to Mohammed* (London, 1971). See also I. Sandwell, *Religious identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews, and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge, 2007), to pick just one of many examples. For the late Roman west the issue has mainly focused on the creation of new identities in the aftermath of the ‘barbarian invasions’: see R.W. Mathisen and D. Shanzer, eds., *Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman world: Cultural Interaction and the Creation of Identity in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2011). For arguments of the adoption of ‘identity’ as a tool to understanding Roman imperial society better than concepts such as Romanisation see D. Mattingly, ‘Cultural crossovers: Global and local
theme: how the individual viewed themselves and their relationship with the outside world, and the wider group identities with which individuals could interact to measure similarities or differences between those they came into contact with. For this study the question is how far a universal, military corporate identity existed in the late Roman period in relation to a regional one which was specific to *Belgica II* and how much variety there was in the ways that soldiers expressed their own sense of what a ‘*miles*’ was. Developments in sociological theory suggest that human social identities are actually very dynamic, and the cumulative everyday actions of individuals through routine actually construct these identities.\(^{20}\) Within this framework changing identities are only to be expected: the question is how far they retained their distinctiveness. Gardner uses these schemes effectively to argue for the maintenance of a distinct military identity in Roman Britain during the later Roman period, though it was an identity with strong regional aspects, which integrated into local networks during the 5\(^{th}\) century after it lost contact with the imperial centre.\(^{21}\) One thread in late Roman studies has been the concern that it is impossible to distinguish between a ‘military’ and a ‘civilian’ identity; that military identities become subsumed into local or regional patterns and that military and civilian relationships were transformed into a similar paradigm as “barbarian” and “Roman” in the early Medieval period.\(^{22}\) This will be explored both in terms of the military identities that are reflected in contemporary texts, but also through material culture which will allow us to understand more directly how soldiers saw themselves.

### 1.2.2 Ethnicity

An important aspect of the discussion on identity is the issue of ethnicity. Many scholars still equate the discovery of ‘Germanic’ artefacts in northern Gaul to the presence of groups from outside imperial frontiers, and thus to Germans serving in the army.\(^{23}\) This is extremely problematic. The documentary record of the army in Gaul is dominated by the many named

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\(^{23}\) This has a huge bibliography which will be dealt with further in chapter 2.
groups who fought for the Empire. Soldiers with different ethnicities and cultures would maintain and change the boundaries between military and civilian communities, and identifying how far this was allowed to continue within the institutional context of the army is a useful focus for this study. But equating a military identity with a ‘Germanic’ one is a circular argument based on several layers of assumptions i.e. that artefacts reflect ethnicity and all ‘Germans’ in Gaul were there to serve in the army. Even the very question of ‘Germanic’ ethnicity is itself moot, given that it was an idea that emerged in the 19th century as a response to nationalism and imperialism.

Questions of ethnicity and the origins of the various barbarian groups are extremely problematic, and are outside the remit of this study. Most scholars, influenced by work in the social sciences, would now agree that these groups were often a diverse range of individuals brought together by circumstance and the leadership of individuals who

24 The first assumption is extremely controversial see for example S. Jones, The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present (London, 1997) and inter alia G. Halsall, ‘The Origins of the Reihengräberzivilisation: Forty Years On’, in J.F. Drinkwater and H. Elton, eds., op. cit., (1992), 196 – 207. The second is palpably false given that there were settlers were also brought in for agricultural purposes.

25 The barbarian groups associated with the end of the Roman Empire (Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Alans, Franks, Alamanni, Lombards etc.) in the west were traditionally seen as being discrete groups of common descent, culture and language who moved from their ancestral homelands under the leadership of war chiefs and royal leaders due to pressure from rival tribes. Their ethnic cohesiveness prevented them from being absorbed into Roman society and thus allowed them to retain their solidarity and in conjunction with other Germanic tribes their presence fatally weakened Imperial structures. For historiography of this issue see P. Heather, Goths and Romans (Oxford, 1991), 1-18 and M. Todd, The Early Germans (Oxford, 1992). ‘Germanist’ scholars in the 19th century followed this to suggest that the end of the Roman Empire was due to German ‘national spirit’ and allowed them to overcome the decadent and weak Romans, who were civilised beyond repair! This was opposed to ‘Romanists’ who were more inclined to stress the Roman contribution in creating the institutional framework of the post-Roman kingdoms. The creation of ‘Visigoths’ and other groups was seen as occurring within the Empire and produced by Roman cultural and social influence. While many of the biological assumptions behind this were discredited by events of the 20th century, they were recreated by scholars in Vienna, who developed the theory of ‘ethnogenesis’ by which a small ‘core’ of leaders were able to create a ‘people,’ by political success in war. This success attracted outsiders from a wide range of backgrounds, and this newly created people were forged together by adoption of a common language, law and culture. Traditions kern idea was developed by R. Wenskus, Stammesbildung und Verfassung (1961, Vienna) and developed by his pupils: see H. Wolfram, History of the Goths (Berkeley, CA, 1988) and W. Pohl and H. Reimitz, eds., Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800 (Leiden, 1998). See also the articles and book chapters collected in T. Noble, ed., From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms (New York, 2006), pp. 1 – 28. This has been vigorously attacked by several historians, including Goffart, who restated the ‘Romanist’ position whereby the post-Roman kingdoms and the ethnic groups who formed their basis were created within a solidly Roman cultural and political context. Indeed he argues that the core texts of the traditionskern are origin myths created in the 6th – 8th centuries by contemporary political leaders who used rhetorical artifice to gain themselves legitimacy see W. Goffart, The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon (Princeton, 1988). Further criticism of the ‘Vienna’ school is found in the articles contained in A. Gillett, ed., On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages (Turnhout, 2002).
emerged from the difficult situation. As a result the differences between ‘barbarian’ groups like the Visigoths and the Roman army of the late Empire are increasingly reduced as both are products of a similar process, whereby different individuals are brought together by the Roman state and equipped in a very similar manner. It has been argued that the Roman army had a long tradition of creating expressions of ethnicity amongst its heterodox recruits to create solidarity amongst its different units. Amory in an extreme case has argued strongly that ethnic distinctions that appear in the sources for the 5th and 6th centuries are merely rhetorical and these different groups that appear to serve in Byzantine armies are in fact a professional distinction as soldiers and they all form part of a ‘Balkan’ military culture. In this project ethnicity will be regarded as a complex and dynamic process in which identities are formed, and deconstructed.

Gardner argues that the late Roman military identity had a distinct regional tendency, and this could be observed in Gaul (as opposed to Britain) by the strong ethnic aspect of military service. This project will therefore need to establish, as far as possible, what is meant by the term ‘Roman’ in the context of understanding how soldiers related to the ‘civilian’ provincial population. We are clearly hostages to both our own modern conceptions of what these terms mean, and to the rhetorical conventions of the sources which impose potentially misleading dichotomies such as barbarian/Roman upon us. Indeed such definitions and meanings were fluid at this period, as can be seen from the amount of

26 T. F.X. Noble, ed., From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms (New York, 2006), pp. 10 - 11. Recent debates on ethnicity have been felt in almost all areas of archaeological and historical research. As one recent study of ethnicity in the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean puts it: “Ethnic spaces turn out to be very differently structured at different places in the world and in different periods of human history; there is a great variation in the way in which people demarcate ethnic groups through distinctive cultural attributes (for instance language) and through historical consciousness.” W. Van Binsbergen and F. Woudhuizen, Ethnicity in Mediterranean Protohistory (Oxford, 2011), pp. 33 – 34.
27 This is the nub of the ethnogenesis argument. Heather for example argues for a considerable proportion of the Visigoths being made up of those who crossed the Danube in 376 and its aftermath while fleeing the Huns: P. Heather, Goths and Romans AD 332 – 489 (Oxford, 1991).
30 The key point that Amory makes is that the individuals are given different identities in different contexts see P. Amory, People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489-554 (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 277-313.
exchange in people and ideas across the Rhine frontier in the 4th century. The study will argue that the tendency to over-militarise the ‘Germanic’ population of northern Gaul is misleading, and based on anachronistic ideas of how 4th century Gaul functioned. This leads to further questions on the cultural and social impact of the ‘Roman’ army and how far the ‘creation’ of the ‘Franks’ that would take political power in Belgica II from the central Imperial authorities took place within the institutional framework of the Roman army. Were they distinct groups who replaced Roman distinctions between soldier and civilian with those of Roman/non-Roman or were they the product of a 4th and 5th century ‘military culture’ described in rhetorical terms by classicising authors?

1.2.3 Integration or Separation?

A particularly relevant debate to the subject of this thesis is the extent to which the Roman army integrated into local provincial society, and how far it remained a sub-community separated from the surrounding population by its organisational structures and corporate identity; almost an elite micro-society. In the context of this study one can ask at which date that one can continue to discuss a “Roman Army” in Gaul, acting as a tool of Imperial government, rather than regional armies of Gaul acting as distinct communities in their own local interests. This social approach has been very common for the Early Empire with studies arguing that the army had a key role integrating pre-Roman societies into the ruling structures of the Empire after Augustus. In the west, for example, auxilia regiments functioned as a means of ‘Romanising’ local elites by co-opting their martial values to the service of the state and spreading language and culture. Soldiers’ pay provided a cash-rich

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34 N. Roymans, ed., From the Sword to the Plough: Three Studies on the Earliest Romanisation of Northern Gaul (Amsterdam, 1996), argues that the auxiliary regiments served as an important route for the integration of the newly conquered Belgic tribes into the Empire: the pre-Roman burial ritual of depositing weapons in northern Gaul continued into the 1st century AD, but with Roman weapons replacing indigenous styles in the post-conquest period; the evidence of the Vindolanda tablet can be used to argue for the impressive degree of integration of Batavian tribesmen given the quality of their Latin and the other cultural trappings of Roman life that had been adopted: A.K. Bowman and D. Thomas, The Vindolanda Writing Tablets (London, 1994). For similar experiences in Roman Africa see E. Fentress, Numidia and the Roman Army: social, military and economic aspects of the frontier zone (Oxford, 1979).
market for commerce, which accelerated the monetisation of provincial society and led to communities springing up outside forts (vici and canabae) which acted as a liaison between soldiers and local groups.\textsuperscript{35} Cities with recognisable forms of Roman municipal government were founded on former military sites, or founded for veterans and this helped spread the basic tenets of Roman urbanisation.\textsuperscript{36} Recruiting grounds for the legions moved from the Mediterranean basin to the frontier provinces, showing an integration of the periphery with the centre.\textsuperscript{37}

It is possible to argue that integration was an accelerated feature during the Late Roman period. The increasingly stationary nature of military units during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century is suggested by the evidence that unit transfers by this point were rarer compared to earlier periods.\textsuperscript{38} A military unit’s station often became the basis of its official nomenclature and fortifications were increasingly constructed near cities and villages, seemingly interweaving them into settlement patterns.\textsuperscript{39} An increasing reliance on local communities for recruitment could also act as a way of binding soldiers to the civilian population by giving them natural empathy with local cultural and social practices, as well as the increased likelihood of kinship ties.\textsuperscript{40} The increased use of billeting in cities to provide accommodation for soldiers would have reduced the physical distance between soldier and civilian and undermined its institutional coherence.\textsuperscript{41} If army privileges and status declined during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century and military service became less desirable, as can be inferred from the legal texts concerning conscription, then one could presume that the social distance between military and civilian society decreased.\textsuperscript{42}

There is some evidence for this effect in the eastern half of the Empire. Alston’s work on the army in Roman Egypt argues military service became far less desirable in the late Empire, soldiers having lost many of the privileges and rewards that had made them a privileged

\textsuperscript{35} T.C.Blagg and M. Millett, eds., \textit{The Early Roman Empire in the West} (Oxford, 1990).
\textsuperscript{36} J.E. Stambaugh, \textit{The Ancient Roman City} (Baltimore, 1988).
\textsuperscript{40} N. Pollard, \textit{Soldiers, Cities and Civilians in Roman Syria} (Michigan, 2000), pp. 152-3.
\textsuperscript{41} For references see P. Southern and K. Dixon, \textit{The Late Roman Army} (London, 1996), pp. 171-2.
elite group. Army units also became thoroughly localised and involved in civilian concerns. In Syria, Libanius famously portrays army officers replacing the local aristocracy in villages of the territory of Antioch during the late 4th century, and providing protection for the local population from the officials of their previous landlords in return for payment. Back in Egypt one of the most valuable records is the Abinnaeus archive which contains the letters of a praefectus stationed in the Fayum between 341 and 351. They appear to show how an army officer could move out of the confines of his immediate institutional environment and becoming a figure of local importance to civilian communities, both as a source of patronage and as the representative of the Imperial power, for instance in the collection of taxation.

However, it will be argued that the ‚integrationist‘ approach is a problem. It often extrapolates wider social processes from lists of civilian roles occasionally fulfilled by soldiers. “Separatists” stress the continued importance of the army’s function as a means of imperial repression. The argument runs that the Empire’s frontiers were not linear defences aiming to protect the provinces from external attack, but frontier zones largely shaped by logistical concerns and historical accident more than strategic purposes. From this view soldiers’ function was primarily controlling and policing the provincial population. The soldiers had to be paid and fed by Emperors who wanted to maintain their hold on power. Roman history is littered with military coup d’états driven by grievances against the central government. This political importance meant that rapacious taxation and requisition of supplies, accommodation and animals were only to be expected by the provincials. Isaac has dismissed differences between the army of the 4th century and the early Empire in the Roman Near East. Pollard’s work on the Roman army in Syria has also supported the ‘separation’ model. He disagrees with Alston’s view that there was a relative

44 Libanius, Oration 47 ‘On Patronage’.
47 B. Isaac, ibid.
decline in soldiers’ social position. Indeed, he considers that the legal and financial privileges of soldiers actually increased during the late Empire.\textsuperscript{51} The employment of large numbers of soldiers from outside the Empire during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century was another factor that reinforced the “otherness” of the army, by increasing the cultural as well as the ideological distances between the indigenous population and the solidery. Bagnall has argued that the Abinnaeus archive does not actually illustrate integration between military communities at all.\textsuperscript{52}

To carry out this violent role effectively the army had to be a ‘total institution’ which remained clearly separated from civilian society by its routines, uniform and religious ritual.\textsuperscript{53} Thus the evidence used to support the ‘integrationist’ school has often been turned on its head. Local recruitment did not necessarily lead to integration. Joining the army, with its status and privileges, could just as easily dislocate the individual from his previous social ties. Indeed, the whole concept of ‘localised’ recruitment may be misleading. Marriages were more likely to have been formed within the wider military community, with the children of comrades, rather than civilian families with whom soldiers had little in common.\textsuperscript{54} Formal and informal interaction of soldiers and civilians does not necessarily lead to \textit{de facto} integration. The progressive separation of civilian and military careers during the Tetrarchic period also argues against ideas of integration, though there was a great deal of interaction at court between high officials of both types.\textsuperscript{55}

\subsection*{1.2.4 Militarisation}

The integration/separation debate has its own paradigm when discussed in the context of the western half of the Empire during the Late Roman period: “militarisation”.\textsuperscript{56} This idea is

\textsuperscript{52} R.S. Bagnall, ‘Military Officers as Landowners in Fourth Century Egypt’, \textit{Chiron}, 22 (1992), 47 – 54
\textsuperscript{54} B. Shaw \textit{ibid}, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{56} “Militarisation” appears in various guises in the literature. The argument was originally articulated in its most influential form by M. Rostovtzeff, \textit{Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire} (Oxford, 1957) who argues that the urban civilian classes that created the prosperity of the Empire in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century were overcome by the army drawn from the peasantry. This was taken on by R. MacMullen, \textit{Soldier and Civilian in
venerable. For Rostovtzeff it was a result of class conflict: the rule of the Tetrarchs represented the triumph of the armed peasantry over the urban bourgeoisie who had generated the Empire’s stability in the 2nd century.\(^{57}\) While Rostovtzeff is passé, the military nature of late Roman Imperial ideology has been forcibly restated by several modern scholars.\(^{58}\) Rostovtzeff’s model was also refined by MacMullen in the 1960s with his conclusion that one of the defining characteristics of the later Empire was the blurring of distinctions between soldier and civilian.\(^{59}\) The key evidence in this model were the ‘frontier soldiers’, *limitanei*, who MacMullen saw as peasant-soldiers, essentially a militia of part-time farmers based on the land they used to support themselves. This ‘blurring’ process is also reflected in modern standard accounts of the diverging histories of the eastern and western Empires. In the latter the process had begun in the late 4th century, and was well underway by the 6th century in the East.\(^{60}\) Civilian government in the west was dominated by a series of military figures (often referred to ‘warlords’ for want of a better term), such as Merobaudes, Stilicho, Constantius, Aetius, Aegidius and Ricimer, amongst others.\(^{61}\) The Exarchate, introduced by the East Roman government in its western provinces during the 6th century, which combined civil and military power, was a culmination of these trends.\(^{62}\)

A criticism of the concept of ‘militarization’ when applied to the Roman Empire is a failure to define terms. James’s thorough definition applies for his study of a “post-Roman” society and so is not directly relevant to the imperial period, though this of course leaves a liminal zone where there is a transition from ‘Roman’ to ‘post-Roman,’ but identifying this with precision is difficult.\(^{63}\) Generally scholars use two main elements in the concept of

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63 “By a militarised society I mean a society in which there is no clear distinction between soldier and civilian, nor between military officer and government official; where the head of state is also commander-in-chief of the army; where all adult free men have the right to carry weapons; where a certain group or class of people (normally the aristocracy) is expected, by reason of birth, to participate in the army; where the education of
militarization when applied as a sociological concept. Firstly, the Roman military became increasingly prominent in society and the landscape. This increasing influence is detected in the changing urban structures and architecture from the 3rd century onwards, most obviously in the enceintes thrown up around fractions of the early Roman settlements and the appearance of projecting towers and fortified gates. Northern Gaul had a far higher concentration of fortifications in the 4th century than in the early Empire. Upland areas around the Meuse and Moselle swarmed with hill forts. There seem to be far more soldiers stationed around the province, and cities arguably now primarily existed to serve military needs hosting arms factories, billets, barracks and stores. This, it is argued, reflects the army’s increasing social and political importance and in everyday life military officers directly controlled the productive lives of provincials to directly serve their needs.

The second element is an adoption of military values by civilian elites who re-armed themselves in response to the problems of political and military insecurity caused by an increasingly ineffective central government. This is argued to be behind changing patterns of rural settlement in the late Empire. Villas changed their form, with occupation becoming more ‘simple’: wood and spolia replaced newly quarried stone as the primary building materials, while baths and under-floor heating were replaced by artisan activities, such as metal-working, as the main function for buildings. Rural buildings and villages of the later Roman period increasingly resembled what have been described by scholars as ‘Germanic’ forms of settlement – such as sunken houses or Grübenhauser. Whittaker, following Van Ossel and others, argued that this is explained by a cultural change, and the increasing importance of military values amongst the elites. These replaced a ‘civilian’

the young thus often involves a military element; where the symbolism of warfare and weaponry is prominent in official and private life, and the warlike and heroic virtues are glorified; and where warfare is a predominant government expenditure and/or a major source of economic profit.” E. James, ‘The Militarisation of Roman Society, 400 – 700’, in A. N. Jørgensen and B. Clausen, eds., Military Aspects of Scandinavian Society in a European Perspective AD 1 – 1300 (Copenhagen, 1997), p. 32.
68 C.R.Whittaker, Frontiers of the Roman Empire: a Social and Economic Study (Baltimore, 1994), pp. 269 – 71
emphasis on lavish decoration and monumental architectural display and were symptomatic of this ‘militarisation.’ Accompanying these changes were transformations in burial rites. Weapons were increasingly deposited as grave goods during the second half of the 4th century, and have been interpreted as an attempt to articulate status by association with martial values. All of these have been argued to represent a militarised zone within northern Gaul.

1.3 Methodology

Any study of Gaul relies heavily on archaeological material, complemented by other sources such as epigraphy and numismatics. Recent innovative approaches to literary sources and archaeological evidence in other fields promise new insights when applied to old material. Recent work has sought to understand cultural patterns in the provinces, and how clothing and burial rites reflect how people articulated their identity in the late Antiquity period. An attempt will be made to test how far the concepts outlined above can be detected in the late Roman province of Belgica II. This will be done by identifying and analysing the evidence of soldiers from material remains and the surviving written evidence directly relevant to the province, having outlined the models and perspectives that can be gleaned from the broader range of sources that inform us about the wider context of Gaul. We will then attempt to see how far this evidence synchronises, and what it tells us about the coherence of late Roman military identities through the whole period, and their relationship with the wider provincial society.

This will attempt to avoid simply forcing an archaeological synthesis into a pre-existing historical framework derived from written texts or vice versa. This is a common, and sometimes justified, criticism of older research, but one that is hard to avoid in historical archaeology, as the temptation to link patterns on the ground to events mentioned in the written sources are tempting. This is not to champion one form of evidence over another.

71 See for example R. Brulet, La Gaule Septentrionale au Bas-Empire (Trier, 1990).
73 E. Swift, Regionality in dress accessories in the late Roman West (Montagnac, 2000).
There is nothing to be gained by condemning the literary evidence as mere rhetoric with no basis in real events, as the material evidence is itself subject to whole range of difficulties and intellectual problems. Recent theoretical work exploring the use of material evidence and documentary evidence in recent decades has greatly improved understanding how different evidence should be handled, and this will be used to find some means of integrating the insights offered by the two disciplines.

One possible reason for the multiplicity of theories is the different forms evidence that are prominent across the Empire. Alston’s study of Roman Egypt is primarily based on papyrological evidence, while Pollard’s work relies on archaeological excavation and survey in Syria. Studies of the army in Roman Africa are usually based on epigraphic evidence. Administrative correspondence between soldiers and civilians could be argued to naturally emphasise an integrated relationship. Material evidence that can be demonstrated as military, either by its nature or context (forts, barracks etc.), involves a value judgement that it is not a civilian site, which reinforces the a priori idea of separation. Isaac’s use of Talmudic evidence in his study of the army in the near East could be argued to give a predictably hostile view of an institution that was culturally and socially alien to Jewish religious leaders. Interpretations are not merely a function of the evidence. Disagreements of interpretation can also arise from the same evidence. The debate between Fentress and Shaw over the army’s role in North Africa during the early imperial period is a useful example. Shaw criticises Fentress’ broadly integrationist approach as being based on a misreading of key evidence. Our approach must therefore be as reflective as possible.

1.3.1 Written sources

Late Roman Gaul benefits from a wider range of literary sources than in the early empire, and many of these were produced by Gallic provincials. These survivals permit the historian to understand how the army was understood on the ‘periphery’ of the Empire, rather than merely in the ‘centre,’ to use sociological jargon. However, these written sources are not

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simple depositories of fact to be excavated by the intrepid scholar – as they have often been used in the past. Historians have become more concerned with understanding late antique texts in terms of their genre, and the socio-political agendas that lie behind them. The influence of literary theorists (lumped together under the convenient shorthand of ‘postmodernists’) has led some to argue for the unobtainability of past events from such written sources. They can be viewed as pieces of free standing rhetoric, divorced from any concrete reality it might be reporting, and reflecting only the prejudices and educational background of the author.

While this perhaps satisfies a deeper longing for complexity, it ignores the fact that authors were knowledgeable individuals written deliberately in a real, contemporary environment. Their words would only resonate with a contemporary audience if it referred to shared cultural and social experience. Navigation around the written material must be done carefully and with reflection, but the paucity of evidence means every scrap must be valued. To prevent endless epistemological digression in the main body of text, the main approaches to different types of sources will be outlined below.

Unfortunately there is no full, detailed political narrative for the whole period. The record of political events has to be reconstructed from a clutch of writers who were active at different times and places across the Empire. Ammianus Marcellinus provides the bulk of political and military narrative in Gaul covering the years 354 to 378, but this is a relatively short period of time and assessing the key processes of change is not easy. The main periods covered are the campaigns of Julian (355-361) and Valentinian (364-375). Ammianus’ use of technical language and military experience, despite the occasional archaism, has lead to favourable assessment by many historians on his usefulness as an informed observer of the Roman army.

This is not to say Ammianus is free of distortion. The rise to power of Julian in 359-61, for example, is artfully treated to disguise Ammianus’ partisan views. Despite this it is

79 See the generally positive assessments of Ammianus as a source: G.A.Crump, Ammianus Marcellinus as a Military Historian (Wiesbaden, 1975); N.J.E. Austin, Ammianus on Warfare, an investigation into Ammianus’ military knowledge (Brussels, 1979) and J.F.Matthews, The Roman Empire of Ammianus (London, 1989).
80 Ammianus disguises the fact that Julian was a usurper by ignoring the question of the legal rights of Constantius and Julian. Julian’s seizure of power is justified by his handling of it, while Constantius’ legal rights are ignored and his decision to face Julian’s claims with violence emphasized to disguise his rights. Ammianus also ignores the precarious position Julian was in without the African grain supply and the unfavourable response of the Roman Senate and the loss of Aquileia to Constantius see J. Szidat, Historischer Kommentar zu
difficult to reasonably argue that the work is not built on a foundation of fact.\(^{81}\) Ammianus certainly visited Gaul while accompanying his commanding officer and patron Ursicinus in 355 and remained there until 357, and there seems no doubt that he drew on memories of his experiences.\(^{82}\) Back in Rome would have probably relied on official accounts of Imperial actions for information. There remained literary contacts between Rome and Gaul throughout the 4th century, and interviewing participants of events in retirement at Rome was possible.\(^{83}\) There can be no doubt though that Ammianus’s work is artfully constructed, and many of the events he may have personally described are wrapped in allusion to make a wider historical point, and his work shouldn’t simply be mined empirically for data.\(^{84}\)

Other historians that deal with Gaul have more strident rhetorical purposes. Zosimus, a pagan civil servant writing at Constantinople under the Emperor Anastasius (491-518) provides information compiled from the work of the early 5th century eastern historians Eunapius and Olympidorus. Unfortunately he is both garbled and polemical, especially when discussing Christian emperors such as Constantine on whom he blamed all ills of the Empire, and his view of the ‘barbarisation’ of the empire makes him problematical as a guide.\(^{85}\) Orosius’s *History against the Pagans in Seven Books* written in Spain displays many of the same faults as Zosimus, but from the Christian perspective, as he attempted to fit his


\(^{84}\) See in particular G. Kelly, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 31 – 103, which argues for the grave difficulty extracting any precise biographical information from Ammianus given that it defies the literary genre he was working in.

\(^{85}\) R. Ridley, tr., *Zosimus: a New History* (Canberra, 1982).
sources into an ideological schema, i.e. that history represented the working out of God’s plan for mankind, but his contemporary observations on events in his lifetime in the early 5th century are useful. Another genre of historical work that emerged in the 4th and 5th centuries was the chronicle. This grew out of Christian writers such as Eusebius of Caesarea, who sought to integrate Christianity into mainstream historiography. Various chroniclers of the 5th century cover events in Gaul such as Hydatius, Prosper, as well as the Chroniclers of 452 and 511. These sparse accounts of the main events lack analytical detail, often have theological agendas (particularly Prosper) and often provide more questions than answers. However, despite these reservations they do have an interest in secular affairs and provide distinctive, local perspectives and an understanding of the different reactions individuals to the events of a tumultuous era (to varying degrees).

The Imperial court was an arena where education and rhetorical training were high value skills. This education provided a shared cultural heritage amongst those serving in positions of administrative responsibility. Literary endeavours were an integral part of the court social networks and a valued leisure pursuit. This produced a demand for works that presented Imperial history in a manageable, digestible format. While they rarely compare in detail with the work of Ammianus, they provide many relevant details. They are also deeply entwined with contemporary events and policy debates. Eutropius’ Breviarum, composed under Valens, provides in its historical narrative many details for armies in the west. Its precise purpose is uncertain, though it probably functioned as a history primer for functionaries. It does seem to have been composed with the aim of justifying Valens’ aggressive policy against Persia. Aurelius Victor who reached high office in Illyricum and Rome under both Julian and Theodosius wrote De Caesaribus which covers the period from Augustus to

86 For an assessment of Orosius that places him into his proper context, and is generally positive towards his education and intelligence, while acknowledging the rhetorical purpose of his work, see A. T. Fear, Orosius: Seven Books of History Against the Pagans (Liverpool, 2010), pp. 6 – 25.
88 J.F. Matthews, Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court AD 364-425 (Oxford, 1975), pp. 32 – 55
Constantius II, and seeks to provide a moral commentary on the Empire, much like his literary model Sallust.\textsuperscript{90} He portrays the rising power of the army and other officials as a disruptive force undermining the health of the state. His rhetorical purpose therefore requires that his work is approached with caution. Even more valuable are surviving fragments of the eastern diplomat Olympiodorus, who wrote in the first quarter of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century of events in the west, are highly valued for their author’s knowledge and insight.\textsuperscript{91}

Thus texts that present the perspective of the Imperial government cannot be taken at face value, but can illustrate contemporary Imperial concerns. The series of panegyrics delivered to various Emperors by Gallic orators during the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} centuries contain accounts of military and political events and, more interestingly, contemporary evidence for ways in which these were presented for a public audience.\textsuperscript{92} The panegyrical poems of Claudian play a similar role for the policies and events involving the government of Stilicho in the early years of Honorius, though the centre of focus had now moved to northern Italy.\textsuperscript{93} The nature of the audience for these works has been much discussed, but even a ‘minimalist’ view would suggest it was made up of the senior administrative and military officials that made up the court circles and, possibly, representative local elites. The authors use the florid late Roman rhetorical style which is frustratingly imprecise in detail for the modern taste, but aimed to demonstrate to the audience a broad and profound classical knowledge. However, they preserve information that would not be known otherwise. By preserving different speeches given at short intermediate periods, it is possible to detect the changing ‘official’ line taken by the Imperial court in response to events, especially during the Tetrarchic period and the early years of Constantine.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{92} C. E. V. Nixon and B. Rodgers, \textit{In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyric Latin}i (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 26 – 33. It is not clear whether all of these were actually given in the form that they are preserved, or revised for publication. The material referring to the military presumably had to be rendered comprehensible for the military officers in the audience, so one would assume that technical information was not grossly distorted, even if expressed in antiquarian terms.
\textsuperscript{94} An often observed feature of the panegyrics published between 306-315 is the way they reflect the political vicissitudes of these years and the changing policies of the different emperors as regards their complex relationships, as well as the ways in which Constantine wanted to be seen see N. Lenski, ‘The Reign of Constantine’ in N. Lenski, \textit{The Age of Constantine} (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 61 – 70.
Other ‘court’ perspectives can be obtained from works by Imperial functionaries with an interest in military matters. The *De Rebus Bellicis* preserves a civilian’s memorandum to Constantius II on how the army could be improved by a programme of mechanisation and fiscal reform, though the practical worth of his suggestions are, at best, optimistic. As with the other principal surviving contemporary military treatise written by Vegetius, the extent to which these ideas were taken seriously is unclear, and these sources with their antiquarian tendencies and idealistic aims cannot be taken at face value. However, they do give a range of contemporary perspectives on military issues and debates that existed amongst those seeking to influence policy.

Literary artfulness also limits the accessibility of letter collections produced by several aristocrats. Several relevant items survive in Symmachus’ correspondence, in particular that between the Roman senator and Ausonius, which record a visit to the Rhine frontier by the former in 369. Especially useful are the letters of the Gallic aristocrat Sidonius Apollinaris which provide the main evidence for Gaul in the later 5th century. They detail his political career in the aftermath of Aetius’ fall, as well as giving a glimpse into the social and ecclesiastical life of the period, albeit a high status view. As these letters were edited for publication, however, they are not a collection of official and private memoranda, but produced to shape the public memory of these individuals to best fit in with the values of their contemporaries. Sidonius, for example, carefully crafted his letters for the fluid, and potentially dangerous, circumstances of late 5th century Gaul. His contemporaries would have understood his allusions, but modern readers cannot in the absence of detailed knowledge of the period. Letter collections such as these provide a perspective, but one filtered through the concerns of a small, literate aristocratic circle. The use of classical allusion and deliberately archaising terms make them difficult to use to describe contemporary circumstances, but they are written in a real historical context.

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This approach is also relevant to the Christian moralists and hagiographers of Gaul whose works survive from the late 4th and 5th centuries. The work of Salvian, for example, gives a wholly negative picture of the actions of the Roman state. He wishes to undermine the whole idea of secular government and emphasise its inherent corruption for his religious purpose of emphasising the transient nature of human achievements compared with the eternal security of God. Hagiography often manipulates the details of the narrative to bolster the theological points that the author intends. In Sulpicius Severus’ *Vita Sancti Martini*, for example, the account of Saint Martin’s miraculous escape from barbarian troops when made an example of by Julian, the archetypal ‘pagan’ Emperor, raises issues of chronology given that Martin had probably started his military career over 20 years before this episode could have occurred, and Sulpicius implies that the holy man did not actually serve for very long. Hagiographers in the late antique period increasingly followed earlier literary models, such as Athanasius’ *Life of Anthony*, to emphasise the sanctity of their subject and their place in holy genealogy. Any historical information that these sources must be detached from the literary and theological filter through which they are written. There are also problems of posthumous lives containing anachronistic information more relevant to the author’s present rather than the time of the subject. The life of Germanus of Auxerre was written about 40 years after the saint’s death by Constantius of Lyon, when the political and social circumstances were probably quite different. However, the authors were writing within a real physical context which had to make sense to the reader. The concerns of hagiographers were different to those of historians and often focused on ordinary people so are invaluable as a source of social history. Each piece of information drawn from such sources must be understood in the context of the work.

102 For a positive assessment of Constantius’ understanding of Gaul (though not Britain) see E. A. Thompson, *Saint Germanus of Auxerre and the end of Roman Britain* (Woodbridge, 1984); for a reminder of the ecclesiastical agendas behind the life of Germanus, particularly anti-Pelagianism, see I. Wood, ‘Germanus, Alban and Auxerre’, *Bulletin du Centre d’Études Médiévales d’Auxerre BUCEMA*, 13 (2009), 123-129.
All authors aimed to persuade their readers to perceive events in a way that reflected their own political and ideological vision. On the other hand, detecting the rhetorical and partisan purposes of these works can provide insights into the circumstances of their creation and allow reconstruction of contemporary debates and issues. The writing of history in antiquity required a search for a deeper truth than simply recording what happened. The rhetorical tradition gave historians leeway in adjusting or creating material that would allow them to do this. But while it did not require a comprehensive assembly of facts or technical details, the writing did have to resonate with contemporary audiences. Such material is what the author believed was likely to have happened, even if they were not completely factual. Therefore the authors’ perspectives, or prejudices, are not necessarily unhelpful and we can, with caution, reconstruct aspects of the past with them.

Evidence for quotidian government administration has remained. This is subject to similar difficulties and limitations to other forms of evidence discussed so far. The manner in which these documents were compiled led to a process of selection and editing for particular purposes other than simply preserving documents in their original form. Laws and edicts preserved by the two major codices – the Theodosian Code (mid-5th century) and the Justinian Code (mid-6th century) provide a wealth of material on the army and its impact on society. These laws have long been queried as to how far they actually reflect social reality. The process of compilation for the Theodosian Code was ideological and antiquarian as well as practical. Its context in the reign of Thedosius II was in attempts of the eastern court to restore unity with the western court after the death of Honorius in 423, with the marriage of Eudocia to Valentinian III in 437.104 The Code could also be an expression of the supremacy of the east.105 However, the practical implications should not be minimised.106 Therefore, the legal material must be used with as full an understanding of the particular circumstances in which it was issued and preserved as possible before it can be used as historical material.

104 J. F. Matthews, Laying Down the Law (Yale, 2000).
105 J. Harries, Law and Empire in Late Antiquity (Cambridge, 1999), p. 37.
106 It has been suggested that another reason for its compilation was the concentration of legal expertise in the quaestors of Theodosius’ court. T. Honoré, Law in the Crisis of Empire AD 379 - 455 (Oxford, 1998), p. 97; the extent of non-metropolitan sources of the legal codes and the degree to which it compiled legal material from throughout the Empire has also recently been emphasised J. F. Matthews, Laying Down the Law (Yale, 2000).
The most important administrative document for this study is the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This identifies explicitly the two areas of official competence in government: civilian and military *Notitia Dignitatum tam civilium quam militarum*. From the perspective of the *Notitia* there were many positions in charge of different army regiments, whose names imply a wide range of different roles and functions. It is usually accepted that the information contained in the *Notitia* dates from the late 4th and early 5th centuries.\(^{107}\) However, it has long been recognised that the surviving form has been subject to much manipulation so that it does not reflect a reality at any one point in time.\(^{108}\) The precise function of the *Notitia* lists seem to have originated with the office of the *Primecerius Notariorum* who drew up letters of appointment for the *dignitates*. The insignial illustration lists the *laterculum maius* was a list which forms the basis of the *Notitia*.\(^{109}\) However, the material in the eastern half seems to reflect the position of the Empire at the death of Theodosius in 395. The suggestion has been made that the military lists reflect the position in 393 as Theodosius prepared for his confrontation with Eugenius and Arbogast, or perhaps even earlier.\(^{110}\) Whether the western list was one created by Theodosius and Stilicho in Milan for the newly controlled provinces after the success of the Frigidus, or as Kulikowksi suggests was part of the same document created by the Eastern *primecerius*, its inconsistency can only be explained by continual revision. J.C.Mann’s schema sees the bulk of the Western document being created between 399 and 408 under Stilicho’s increasing influence, and compiled with the old eastern half in 408 as part of his attempt to extend his influence over the eastern government of Thedosius II.\(^{111}\) The lists continued to be revised. Chapter VII, the list of military units arranged geographically, in the western half seems to be created later addition, given that the *Comes Hispaniae*, a post first known about in the 420s, is placed between the Gaulish and African


\(^{109}\) *Not. Dig.*, Or. XVIII.


lists rather than tacked on at the end. Chapters V and VI reflect haphazardly an attempt to reflect these later changes.\textsuperscript{112}

The seductive potential of the \textit{Notitia}, given that we have precious little else to give us an insight into the bureaucratic workings of the palatine administration, means it is still the fundamental tool for late Roman army studies. However, its ideological function has recently come under closer scrutiny. Brennan places the surviving \textit{Notitia} within a context of the restructuring of Imperial power in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{113} The purpose of such a document is to illustrate the ideology of the ruling power, and its administrative purpose is thus secondary, if it exists at all. Brennan places the \textit{Notitia} in the same antiquarian framework as Macrobius’ \textit{Saturnalia}, of educated elites creating a past world from fragments and wishful thinking. The marriage of Valentinian with Theodosius II’s daughter Eudocia in 437, with its symbolic importance of reuniting and recreating an Empire that had in fact been transformed is another occasion for which the surviving \textit{Notitia} would be suitable.\textsuperscript{114}

Using the \textit{Notitia} for information about the position of the army in Gaul is therefore a dangerous prospect, but it is not a hopeless endeavour.\textsuperscript{115} The reductionist positions outlined above are unnecessarily pessimistic. As with the literary sources, most scholars have long since abandoned the carefree plundering of ancient sources for basic facts. Of course it was in the interest of Valentinian’s court to stress the continued existence of a Roman ‘army’ in Gaul and elsewhere in the Empire, especially as he had such a tenuous control over generals such as Aetius.\textsuperscript{116} But the power of Imperial ideology was in its ability to unite a wide range of different cultural and political circumstances and the flexibility that allowed it to be recreated on a local basis. The document can be trusted that to tell us the name of a military unit associated with a place at one point in time, and while we will find it difficult to plot dynamic patterns of change, its absence would be worse. Doubts about how contemporary the information within the document is can be found e.g. for Britain, but

\textsuperscript{112} J. Mann, \textit{op cit.}, (1991), 218 – 9, though the use of \textit{termini post quem} can be dangerous when these assumptions form of the basis of conjectures and arguments that quickly set into accepted judgements.


\textsuperscript{114} J. F. Matthews, \textit{Laying Down the Law} (Yale, 2000).


\textsuperscript{116} J. O’Flynn, \textit{Generalissimos of the Western Roman Empire} (Edmonton, 1983), pp. 88 – 103.
recent studies have suggested that the information may be more accurate than has been believed.¹¹⁷

1.3.2 Epigraphy

Epigraphy is another important source of evidence for the social and economic aspects of military life. Inscriptions were erected by soldiers and their families, and therefore provide a direct written link with the past. Most scholars would argue that inscriptions are subject to the same problems of rhetorical convention and interpretation as other written texts. Most inscriptions discovered before the late 20th century have little recorded information concerning their original context. Using inscriptions for the late antique period is also rendered problematic by the loss of the ‘epigraphic habit’ in the 3rd century.¹¹⁸ The numbers of surviving inscriptions in Gaul is relatively low in comparison to other parts of the Empire, but drop off markedly during the 4th century and beyond.¹¹⁹ Whether this is a historical reality rather than an accident of preservation is unclear as there are other possible explanations for the apparent numerical decline.¹²⁰ Inscriptions continued to be produced in certain areas, such as the Trier region. The spread of Christianity was a catalyst for the production of inscriptions, which also caused a diminution of the professional information that earlier inscriptions contained, replacing them with statements of religious devotion.¹²¹ Many inscriptions are undated as a result and so are often assigned to earlier periods on palaeographic grounds often strongly influenced by the idea that the epigraphic habit is a feature of the early Imperial period. The lack of direct dating evidence also makes it difficult to assign into a chronological framework and this makes changing trends hard to spot.

¹¹⁷ This can be seen in the approaches to the British garrison N. Hodgson, ‘The Notitia Dignitatum and the later Roman garrison of Britain,’ in V. Maxfield and M. Dobson, eds., Roman Frontier Studies 1989 (Exeter, 1991), 84 – 91, argues that the units under the Dux Britanniarum in ND Occ. XL ‘per lineam valli’ are not necessarily relics from the past but could have continued to exist into the 4th century given the evidence for unit stability in the archaeological evidence contra the views of M. Hassall, ‘Britain in the Notitia,’ in R. Goodburn and P. Bartholomew, eds., Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum. (Oxford, 1976), pp. 103 – 117.
¹²⁰ Though there is unquestionable evidence of a drop in the number of inscriptions produced, the epigraphic did continue in most parts of the Empire – especially Africa and the East: C. Rouché, Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity (London, 1989). One observation is that many inscriptions have survived in the west due to their incorporation into city walls constructed during the 3rd/4th centuries. Subsequent inscriptions were far more vulnerable to more destructive forms of recycling.
¹²¹ M. Handley, Death, Society and Culture (Oxford, 2003),
Despite these problems, there is a small corpus of inscriptions relating to soldiers for the late Imperial period in Belgica II. These can provide additional information for comparative purposes as can epigraphic patterns from other parts of the Empire. Epigraphy provides us with useful details about soldiers including their length of service, family details, as well as a sense of identity, both individual and institutional.\textsuperscript{122} The location of the inscriptions also provides information on potential location of military units, or at least where soldiers ended up in their retirement. Inscriptions also inform us how the soldier and/or his family wished his memory to be viewed posthumously. This should not be seen as a simple reflection of his life but an idealisation.\textsuperscript{123} Many forms of ritual associated with the deposition of the dead function in a similar way. The recording of an individual’s details on a stone was an important statement of status given the considerable labour and wealth required to produce it. The question of what the erector had to gain by leaving a permanent marker to their family must be considered. There is a degree to which the individual was negotiating their position in society by perhaps confirming how far they have come from their origins.\textsuperscript{124} Woolf has argued that the provincial epigraphic habit in the early Empire reflects the instability in post-conquest societies and was an attempt to consolidate individual positions within a new system of social status, where there was no tradition or ancestral memory to call upon.\textsuperscript{125} But both he and Meyer argue that from the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, the clear social distinctions of the early Empire became blurred.\textsuperscript{126} The social, political and religious changes of late antiquity provide a situation of similar uncertainty where individuals could use inscriptions as a means of adopting a permanent marker of social status in a fluid society.\textsuperscript{127} The question of how far military inscriptions reflect the relative social position of soldiers and their attempts to negotiate their status is therefore a potentially fruitful line of investigation. Can we say that this is the activity of a comfortably established elite group or one in which social competition is a pressing issue?

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{122} V. Hope, \textit{Constructing Identity: the Roman funerary monuments of Aquileia, Mainz and Nîmes} (Oxford, 2001), p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{123} V. Hope, \textit{ibid.}, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{124} V. Hope, \textit{ibid.}, p. 34-35.
\item \textsuperscript{126} E. Meyer, ‘Explaining the epigraphic pattern in the Roman Empire: the evidence of epitaphs’, \textit{Journal of Roman Studies}, 80 (1990), 74 – 96.
\item \textsuperscript{127} M. Handley, \textit{Death, Society and Culture} (Oxford, 2003), pp. 13-14.
\end{itemize}
1.3.3 Archaeology

The material remains of the military system in northern Gaul are relatively extensive, and they also provide a potential corrective and alternative narrative to the literary evidence. The quality and quantity of western European archaeology has expanded exponentially over the last few decades as excavation techniques have become more technologically sophisticated. The development of national infrastructure: expansion of train and the motorway networks as well as urban developments, has instigated a systematic rescue archaeology that has produced a wealth of information. The combination of aerial reconnaissance, land surveys and excavations has provided data that provides both a breadth of information and a coherent dating framework through the development of techniques of stratigraphy.\(^{128}\) This information is still variable in quality and quantity, however. Rural surveys are increasingly accumulating information on the settlement of the countryside in the 3\(^{rd}\), 4\(^{th}\) and 5\(^{th}\) centuries.\(^{129}\) Understanding the urban archaeology of Gaul is problematic given the continual settlement of most cities since Roman times and patterns in the late Roman period are particularly difficult to define and understand.\(^{130}\)

Archaeology has also been subject to methodological introspection which affects the assessment of evidence. The ‘New Archaeology’ (Processual) movement that emerged in the 1960s emphasised optimistically the ability of material culture to reflect patterns of gradual long-term change. Many archaeologists believed this was a more efficacious way to understand the ancient past than using documentary evidence, given the ability of archaeologists to be objective and scientific.\(^{131}\) As discussed above, writing was the preserve of elite groups, who were often a considerable distance away from the events they described, both in time and location. Their chronological span is erratic, leaving us largely ignorant of events for decades at a time. Archaeology, through the uncovering of material evidence by excavation and land survey, allows understanding of a broader cross section of

\(^{128}\) For a good summary of modern excavation techniques see K. Greene, *Archaeology: an introduction* 5\(^{th}\) edition (Abingdon, 2010).


society. Material evidence therefore adheres to general social theories such as wealth and hierarchy, and would argue that burials are a functional reflection of the social status of the buried individual during their life: thus a lavishly furnished grave would represent an important, aristocratic individual. This moved the focus away from attribution to groups mentioned in historical texts. Some have argued that ethnicity (in the sense of linking archaeological cultures to named groups in the written sources) is in itself not really compatible with archaeological evidence which reflects long term structures and regional cultural traditions.\textsuperscript{132}

This confidence has broken down somewhat under the ideas of ‘post-processual’ archaeologists who have re-emphasised the importance of texts and pointed out how material culture is constructed by societies in the same manner as written texts, and must be interpreted with great caution.\textsuperscript{133} Material and textual evidence often reveal different concerns that, while they cannot be simply grafted onto each other, have perspectives which can be complementary. This study will generally lean towards a post-processualist position and emphasise that context is crucial to any interpretation, and meta-narratives such as ‘ethnicity’ are dangerously misleading. Chapter 2 will develop the discussion of the material evidence in detail when highlighting the main material criteria.

### 1.3.4 Case Study: Belgica II

Belgica II covered the flat, plains of northern Picardy and the coastal Pas-de-Calais region of modern France. The coastal area seems to have been subject to a rising sea level and increased flooding during the late Empire. The panegyric addressed to Constantius in 297 describes the area to the north of the province (modern Flanders) as a zone of marshes.\textsuperscript{134} This was a more heavily urbanised area than Belgica I with a complex and developed road

\textsuperscript{132} S. Brather, ‘Ethnic Identities as Constructions of Archaeology: the Case of the Alamanni,’ in A. Gillett, ed., On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages (2002), pp. 149 – 175, which argues that too many attempts to identify ethnic groups in the Early Middle Ages (he uses the Alamanni as his case study) are reflections of modern theoretical constructions and that the usual sources of identity, such as costumes and grave goods, are more likely reflections of general regional patterns. The problem of whether one is identifying the movement of peoples or ideas is another issue that he argues cannot be resolved by material evidence. Archaeology, he suggests, should stick to doing what it does best.


\textsuperscript{134} Panegyrici Latini, IV.8.2.
network. In the early Empire there was a very limited military presence, apart from Bononia (Boulogne) which was the base of the *classis Britanniae*. The countryside was prosperous and its wealth seems to have been based on the wool trade, cloaks and clothing being well known throughout the Empire.\textsuperscript{135} Diocletian’s Price Edict mentions cloaks from Arras and Amiens.\textsuperscript{136} In the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, archaeological and epigraphic evidence indicates that a military presence seems to have become more regular. This development continued during the late Empire. There were important military centres such as Reims, where campaign armies are recorded as having been assembled under Julian and Valentinian. Emperors also wintered with their *comitatus* at Amiens and Paris, as well as using the road network for travel to Britain. Forts were also constructed on the coast probably as part of the same thinking that lead to the construction of the coastal forts on the south of Britain and further west into Armorica. This increased military presence, and its diversity, means there are potentially profitable comparisons and insights to be gleaned.

**1.3.5 Research questions**

- Did a coherent ‘Roman’ military identity exist in *Belgica* II during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century?
- At what point in the 5\textsuperscript{th} century is there a point in which we can no longer refer to ‘Roman’ soldiers?
- How far was there a process of integration underway between soldiers and the provincial population of *Belgica* II during the late Roman period?
- How far was the landscape of *Belgica* II dominated by the military, to the extent one can argue that the province was ‘militarised’?

The research questions will be pursued by attempting to place the provincial investigation in a wider context. Firstly, key themes in terms of military identity and the relationship with wider society across the period under investigation will be explored in the literary evidence relevant to Gaul. Secondly there will be an examination of the material evidence and the issues that face its interpretation, while bringing in some examples from neighbouring provinces. This will create a wider context for the specific focus on the material and written evidence from the province of *Belgica* II.

Chapter 1: Military identities in the 4th century & 5th Centuries

1.1 Introduction

At the end of the 3rd century while describing the career of Maximian, a Gallic panegyricist described the Emperor’s birthplace, Pannonia, as the: “Seat of the bravest of legions”, and questioned whether he should mention: “The first standards to inaugurate your imperial auspices, which (were) the camps to receive you as their master, which the expeditions which led you in various directions”.\footnote{Panegyrici Latini, X.2.5.-6: “Quae te prima signa imperatoriis auspiciis inaugurarint, quae castradominum habitura susceperint, quae bella diduxerint, quae victoriae auxerint?”}. This trinity of signa – castra – bella suggests that the civilian author believed in a clear, coherent military identity. The distinction between soldier and civilian is also drawn out in a memorable passage, where the panegyrist seems to be describing a (hurried) reaction to a military threat on the frontier by Maximian. In a series of juxtapositions he lays down several images which illustrate a dichotomy between the two spheres of activity: toga praetexta/thorax, scipio/hasta and tribunal/campus.\footnote{Panegyrici Latini, X.6.4.: “Togam praetextam sumpto thorace mutasti, hastam posto scipio/rapiasti, a tribunali temet in campum, a curuli in equum transportasti et rursus ex acie cum triumpho redistis…” (As swiftly and easily as you doffed the toga praetexta and put on the cuirass, laying down staff and seizing a spear, transporting yourself from the tribunal to the field of battle, from the curule seat to horseback, and returning again from the fray in triumph).} This suggests that in the context of imperial rhetoric, there was a clear understanding of the role of soldiers and their distinction from civilian life. There is a tendency in the sources to refer to the soldiers as an undifferentiated mass, which probably reflects a civilian perspective. Claudius Mamertinus’ panegyric talks of the problems facing Julian in Gaul where: “Soldiers (milites), often trifled with in times past, were demanding the pay owed to them.”\footnote{Panegyrici Latini, III.1: “Milites saepe antea actis temporibus ludo habitipursum stipendium flagiterant”}. Lactantius also strongly emphasises the separation of soldier and civilian when he describes Constantine, in the context of Diocletian and Galerius’s discussions over the succession to the first Tetrarchy, as: “Beloved by the soldiers and by choice of the private citizens.”\footnote{Lactantius, De Mortibus Persecutorum, 18.10: “A militibus amatatur, a privatis et optaretur”} In many ways therefore, the ‘Roman army’ could still be understood in concrete terms during the late Roman period. It was formed of milites who undertook militia. They fought professionally at public expense, provided for materially by the imperial administration and, most importantly, their violence was legitimised by service to the emperor. This last point is...
a particularly pertinent factor as we move from the end of the 4th into the 5th century, as there was a significant fragmentation of political authority in Gaul caused by the rise of many different forms of alternative claims to loyalty. One could qualify the issue of legitimacy as being represented by an: “Emperor with general acceptance amongst a significant number of the Empire’s political classes.” A complicating factor is that the words *militia* and *exercitus* appear to have had more abstract meanings. It will be argued that an optimal approach to this question is to focus less on the institutional structure of the army, which can be seen as a product of an anachronistic tendency in modern scholarship, and rather to view Roman soldiers as social beings, defined by a dynamic set of identities and attributes which proved surprisingly resilient despite the significant changes that occurred during this period. This conceptual system continued to provide a robust cultural framework for legalised state violence, even when the logistical system supporting it began to dissolve. These complex identities are central to any understanding of how the military functioned in Late Roman society.

This chapter will examine the extant written sources to assess what light they shine on the different military identities and structures that appear in Gaul during the 4th and 5th centuries. As there are few texts directly relevant to *Belgica II*, texts that either focus more broadly on Gaul, or that can provide a direct analogy, will be used.

### 1.2 Defining *militia*

Ancient written sources usually refer to the Roman army in terms of *militia* (armed service): where *milites* (soldiers) are serving in an *exercitus* (army). However, the meaning of *militia* is quite a general one. It can mean ‘service’ in a broader sense than a purely military one; in the imperial bureaucracy for example. There were deliberate parallels between the two branches of imperial service. Civilian officials were paid in rations (*annona*), and possessed a similar uniform (*vestis*), with belt (*cingulum*) and the ‘crossbow’ brooches (*fibulae*) that denoted an individual’s status in both branches of service. One could argue that the

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141 This can include usurpers, who proliferate in the late 4th century, and barbarian leaders who emerge as *reges* e.g. Alaric possibly from military contexts. We also have Roman military leaders who while not Emperors themselves are politically dominant – often described as “generalissimos” e.g. Stilicho; see J. M. O’Donnell, *Generalissimos of the late Roman Empire* (Alberta, 1983).

142 See for example E. Swift, *The End of the Western Roman Empire* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 27 – 52.
distinction between a *miles* and a civilian undergoing *militia* would be obvious to a contemporary observer. Ammianus Marcellinus refers to himself as: “*Haec ut miles quondam et Graecus*.”\(^{143}\) It would be difficult to understand this as meaning anything but a soldier, given the biographical details of military service he recounts in his *Res Gestae*.\(^{144}\) On the other hand, Ammianus served as a *protector* whose functions, while primarily military, were far removed from the duties of the humble *pedes*, involving administrative work such as intelligence gathering.\(^{145}\) *Agentes in rebus* and *notarii* were civil functionaries who also undertook military roles, such as intelligence gathering.\(^{146}\) There are also examples of ‘civilian’ officials commanding soldiers in the 4\(^{th}\) century, such as when Iovis, the *Quaestor Palatium Sacrum*, commanded an army group in Julian’s march to meet Constantius II in 361, and was detached to besiege Aquileia.\(^{147}\) The other major group of *milites* were the *fabricenses* who worked in the imperial arms factories (*fabricae*). Their service granted them the same status as other *milites*: the capacity to draw rations from the *annona*, exercise legal exemptions and a hierarchical system of promotions.\(^{148}\) The precise meaning of *militia* can therefore be elusive.

The administration of the late Roman Empire was characterised by the strict separation of civilian and military responsibilities.\(^ {149}\) Praetorian Prefects, for example, had their military responsibilities removed during Constantine’s reign, and these were then taken on by the *magistri militum*.\(^ {150}\) All the examples of overlapping military and civilian roles quoted above can be explained as situations where personal loyalty to the Emperor overrode institutional boundaries rather than implying a systematic blurring of competences.\(^ {151}\) It seems unlikely that individuals could mistake their institutional role: Symmachus uses the adjective *militaris* and legal texts use the term *armata* to distinguish between the civilian and military

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\(^{144}\) For Ammianus as soldier see introduction, notes 81 – 83.


\(^{147}\) Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XXI.8.3; also see Florentius the Praetorian Prefect advising Julian to attack the Alamanni at Strasbourg in 357, XVI.12.14.


branches of the imperial service. The *Codex Theodosianus* preserves two rescripts that discuss the confusion over whether it fell within the remit of the Praetorian Prefect or the *Magister Militum* to deal with an appeal when a provincial governor had conducted a case against a soldier. Soldiers’ weapons and uniforms would have been unambiguous to a contemporary observer, additionally reflecting their particular regimental affiliations. A common theme throughout Roman history was the symbolic importance of the soldier’s uniform, which was common displayed in public art (e.g. funerary reliefs) and also represented status and hierarchy within the army.

Hostility between the civilians and soldiers is a topos in late Roman sources, which further suggests the maintenance of distinctive identities. At Cabyllona (Chalons-sur-Saone) in 354, the failure of the Praetorian Prefect, Rufinus, to produce supplies caused problems according to Ammianus: “He (Rufinus) was forced to go in person before the troops, who were aroused both by the scarcity and by their natural savage temper, and besides they were naturally inclined to be harsh and bitter towards men in civil positions.” Aurelius Victor, writing during the 350s, rarely has anything good to say about milites. *De Caesaribus* makes several damning comments about soldiers’ greed and corruption. In the account of Gordian I, Victor writes: “The soldiers were angry at being deceived by these promises (rewards offered) being the sort of men who are very greedy for money and loyal and true solely for profit.” There is damnation by faint praise when discussing the election of Claudius Gothicus: “The soldiers, whom the desperate state of affairs compelled, quite contrary to their natural inclination, to make the right decisions….eagerly approved and

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152 Symmachus, Ep.III.67: “Militiae stipendiis cum honestate perfunctum...legimitia...praemia...veteranis.”
153 For example Cod. Th. 1.5.10 (393); Cod. Th. 1.7.2 (393).
154 The best evidence for this are the unit shield patterns than survive in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Their accuracy has been challenged, but there is sufficient indication from other sources that while some of the shield depictions may be authentic e.g. the Cornuti, many of the emblems in the surviving 15th and 16th century copies are products of later copyists’ imaginations: R. Grigg, ‘Inconsistency and Lassitude: the Shield Emblems of the *Notitia Dignitatum*,’ *Journal of Roman Studies*, 73, (1983), 132-142.
156 Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, XIV.10.4: “Unde Rufinus ea tempestate praefectus praetorio, ad discrimen trusus est ultimum. Ire enim ipse compellebatur ad militem, quem exagitabat inopia simul et feritas, et aliqui coalito more in ordinarias dignitates asperum semper et saevum.”
praised the accession of Claudius."¹⁵⁸ He condemns several other groups too, such as the *actuarii* and the *agentes in rebus*, for their corruption.¹⁵⁹ Victor’s grievances appear to have their origins in resentment amongst the senatorial class at the political influence of their social inferiors.¹⁶⁰ When the matter of succession is referred to the Senate by the soldiers after the death of Aurelian, Victor comments: “The matter was debated with propriety and moderation on both sides, virtues rare among people...and almost unheard of with soldiers.”¹⁶¹ The viewpoint of men in civilian positions is not exclusively hostile. The author of *de Rebus Bellicis* suggests a range of rather impractical improvements to the military establishment, which shows the active interest in military policy amongst bureaucrats. His ideas include an attempt to curb expenditure by having soldiers serve for shorter periods of time, and subsequently using the younger veterans to cultivate land more vigorously and thus increasing the number of taxpayers.¹⁶² Eutropius, another civilian official, mentions these issues more circumspectly in his *Breviarum*, but several times describes a clear dichotomy between soldiers and provincials.¹⁶³

*Militia* had a general applicability to anyone serving the emperor. What this brief textual survey tends appears to suggest is that despite the lack of precision demanded by a modern reader in Latin terminology, it was possible for contemporaries to make distinctions between the different branches of *milites* in the 4th century.

### 1.3 ‘Militia’ as a rhetorical category

*Militia* was also a rhetorical concept that could easily become detached from the concrete reality of soldiers garrisoned in forts, or fighting under imperial command. It gradually transferred into a Christian milieu from the 1st century AD onwards and was deeply ingrained into Christian rhetoric by the 4th and 5th centuries when ecclesiastical and...

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¹⁵⁸ Aurelius Victor, *de Caesaribus*, 34.1. See also the successes of Probus: “He had crushed the barbarian tribes which had invaded when our Emperors had been killed by the treachery of their own men.”

¹⁵⁹ For *Actuarii* see *de Caesaribus*, 33; for *Agentes in Rebus* see *de Caesaribus*, 39, where they compared with *frumentarii*.


¹⁶¹ Aurelius Victor, *de Caesaribus* 35: “Ita utrimque pudore ac modestia certabatur, rara in hominibus virtute, rebus praestimt huicscemodi, ac prope ignota milites”.

¹⁶² Anon., *De Rebus Bellicis*, V.

¹⁶³ Eutropius, *Breviarum*, 10.3.
Hagiographical sources often talk of *milites Dei*, usually translated as ‘soldiers of Christ’.\(^{164}\)

The term derived from the analogy of spiritual combat against the Devil and his works to organised service given to an *imperator* i.e. Christ. An organised service is even more applicable to the organisation of many of the earliest ascetic groups on institutional/military lines.\(^{165}\) Orosius uses the term in the context of Valens’ persecution of monks (*monachi*) in Egypt while forcing them into military service (*ad militia*): describing them as: “True soldiers of Christ”.\(^{166}\) The analogy of military service is stronger in other texts. Lactantius in the early 4\(^{th}\) century uses it in the context of combat when describing the martyrdom of Donatus: “A soldier of Christ such that no enemy can storm you... he (the devil) found he could not conquer you in combat.”\(^{167}\) St Augustine makes the explicit comparison when writing to the *Comes* Bonifatius that the *milites Christi* undertake spiritual combat as opposed to physical combat of soldiers.\(^{168}\) Eugippius’s *Life of Saint Severinus* provides a neat juxtaposition between *milites* of the Empire and a *miles Dei* when describing Severinus’ activities in Raetia. The hagiographical aim of the work would seem to be to illustrating the ephemeral nature of protection provided by the powers of the world in comparison with the power of God. In Eugippus’ account Saint Severinus provides the only effective defence against barbarian raiders and it is he who negotiates with the local raiding tribes, while the ability of the Empire to provide protection through its officials and soldiers is negligible.\(^{169}\)

This evolution is a testament to how the Roman Empire’s increasing weaknesses saw loyalty to Christianity becoming not only an alternative source of loyalty, but also protection and patronage.

This leads to an important aspect of *militia*, the extent to which the term was a gauge of political loyalty as much as a professional identity. Grünewald has argued that the term *latrones* (bandits) was not functional, but rather a means of abusing individuals and groups that had opposed the established system. Those setting themselves up as usurpers to

\(^{164}\) For St Paul’s use of the whole armour of God and a series of other military metaphors through to the helmet of righteousness amongst other military metaphors see Ephesians 6.11 – 17.

\(^{165}\) A good example is the monk Pachomius, who was a former *miles*: P. Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-century Egypt* (UCLA, 1999).

\(^{166}\) Orosius, *Historia contra Paganos*, VII.33.3: “Huc tribuni et milites missi, qui sanctos ac ueros milites Dei alias nomine persecutionis abstraherent. interfecta sunt ibi agmina multa sanctorum”.

\(^{167}\) Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, 16.9-10: “Hoc est militem Christi....quem tot proelii expertus est non posse superare.”

\(^{168}\) Augustine, *Ep.*, CCXX.9 to Count Bonifatius uses the term, “*Milites Christi*”.

\(^{169}\) Eugippius, *Vita Severini*, ch. 4, 11 & 19.
challenge the legitimate emperor became tyrants and bandits in the written sources.\textsuperscript{170} An example would be the abuse heaped on Carausius and the \textit{bagaudae} in Gaul during the 280s and 290s. The \textit{bagaudae} are dismissed as peasant insurgents whose attempts to fight are mocked by Maximian’s panegyrictist.\textsuperscript{171} One must take these accounts with caution: historians have been too quick to fit these accounts into Marxian visions of peasant revolution.\textsuperscript{172} This is another collective Roman term describing a wide range of activities.\textsuperscript{173} Coins minted by a named bagaudic leader, Amandus, showing him as a Roman emperor are Renaissance fakes, which undermines attempts to argue the revolt was another usurpation of the period.\textsuperscript{174} Carausius’s origins are obscure, but he appears to have been a military officer who was forced to revolt when he fell out with Maximian.\textsuperscript{175} His condemnation in the sources as a non-Roman warlord is contradicted the traditional policies he seems to have pursued.\textsuperscript{176} The immense difficulties in unravelling such one-sided accounts aside, this would suggest how flexible the concept of \textit{militia} could be when applied to particular situations.

Although bearing arms was illegal there was probably no state monopoly in reality.\textsuperscript{177} Civilians, slaves, urban citizens or veterans seem to have been responsible for some defensive activities in the late Empire, but on an \textit{ad hoc} basis as there seems to have been

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{170} T. Grünewald, \textit{Bandits in the Roman Empire} (London, 2004), pp. 80-87.
\item \textsuperscript{171} Bacaudae: \textit{Pan. Lat.} X.4.3 “An non illud malum simile monstrorum biforium in hisce terris fuit quod tua, Caesar, nescio utrum magis fortitudine repressum sit an clementia mitigatum, cum militaris habitus ignari agricolae appetuerunt, cum arator peditem, cum pastor equitum, cum hostem barbarum suorum cultorum rusticus uastator imitates est?” (Was this not similar to that calamity of two shaped monsters in our land, I know not whether to say suppressed by your bravery, Caesar, or calmed by your mercy? Inexperienced farmers sought military garb; the plowman imitated the infantryman, the shepherd the cavalryman, the rustic ravager of his own crops the barbarian enemy. This I pass over in haste, for I see that such are your dutiful feelings that you prefer that victory to be cast into oblivion rather than glorified).
\item \textsuperscript{172} E. A. Thompson, ‘Peasant Revolts in Late Roman Gaul and Spain’, \textit{Past & Present}, 2 (1952-1953), 11 -23.
\item \textsuperscript{173} J.C. Sánchez León, \textit{Los Bagaudas: rebeldes, demonios, mártires : revueltas campesinas en Galia e Hispania durante el Bajo Imperio} (Jaén, 1996)
\item \textsuperscript{174} L. Okamura, ‘Social Disturbances in Late Roman Gaul: Deserters, Rebels and Bagaudae,’ in T. Yuge and M. Doi, eds., \textit{Forms of Control and subordination in Antiquity} (Leiden, 1988), pp. 288 – 302, argues for the usurpation theory while admitting the evidence is thin. Cathy King \textit{pers. comm}. does not believe that any of the recorded coins, e.g. the three mentioned in \textit{RIC} V.2, are authentic as the earliest publication of any Amandus coin dates to 1579. Coins from previously unknown Gallic usurpers have been discovered recently, e.g. Domitianus: A. Benenson, ‘Finding a lost emperor in a clay pot’, \textit{Archaeology}, (October 11, 2005) <http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/coin/index.html>
\item \textsuperscript{175} The main sources for Carausius’s origins are Aurelius Victor, \textit{de Caesaribus}, 39. 17 – 20 and Eutropius, \textit{Breviarum}, 9.20-21.
\item \textsuperscript{176} P. J. Casey, \textit{Carausius and Allectus: The British Usurpers} (London, 1994).
\item \textsuperscript{177} C. Th., 15.15.1 (364).
\end{itemize}
no permanent institutional structure to organise this. A law of Valentinian III reduced the official restrictions on holding weapons legally in the face of a serious Vandal threat to Italy in 440, but the law stresses that while local people can use weapons to defend themselves the key principles of free birth and public discipline were not to be impaired. This reads as a weak attempt to legitimise current practice rather than evidence of the iron control of the Roman state, in the 5th century at least. The increasing prevalence of weapons burials in northern Gaul during the latter half of the 4th century onwards testify to an increasingly tenuous control by central imperial authorities. The centrality of imperial legitimacy to armed groups continues through the various ‘barbarian’ groups operating in the 5th century, such as the Visigoths, who have been argued to represent ‘Roman’ armies.

Militia was therefore not just a discrete reference to a particular institutional structure, but also a more general sense of political and military loyalty. The Roman Empire, when it was weak, probably spent much of its time legitimising armed groups that were formed outside of routine imperial procedures, so that they could be integrated into the military framework based on the group’s decision to show loyalty to the emperor.

1.4 Army or Armies?

Translating exercitus as, “the Roman army”, in the late antique period can be very misleading if it is used to conceive of a unitary military institution in the way one would discuss a modern, national force such as the British or Turkish army, or even the Roman citizen army of the Republic. The rhetorical device praising victorious legions of one glorious Roman army that survive in many late imperial texts shows how deeply the image of Roman military power projected during the great period of imperial expansion, between 100 BC and AD 100, was embedded in the collective memory. Texts such as Claudian’s panegyrics discuss Roman soldiers in anachronistic terms of, “Maniples”, and, “Cohorts”, that allude to the early Empire and its military successes. A survey of the use of the term exercitus in the Panegyrici Latini illustrates how the word was used across the 4th century. When

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179 Nov. Vol. 9 (Rome, 440).
180 See n. 300.
181 P. Amory, People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy 489 – 554 (Cambridge, 1997).
182 e.g. Claudian, Contra Rufinum II.173: “Pugnandi cupidas accendit voce cohortes.” (He (Stilicho) influences with his voice the hearts of the cohorts with fire).
discussing the marriage of Constantine and Fausta in 307, the panegyricist makes a
digression on the importance of procreation for the: “Human strength of Roman armies,”
which could also be rendered as: “The armies of the Romans”. However one translates it
*exercitus* is qualified by, “Roman”, rather than being described as a separate entity. In the
panegyric addressed to Maximian at Trier in the late 280s the author stresses the emperor’s
piety in his desperation to get back to: “Your army”, (*exercitus vestros*). Nazarius’s
panegyric to Constantine mentions: “This invincible army of yours”, (*exercitum tuum*). In
Constantine’s campaign of 312 against Maxentius, he was opposed at Verona by: “A large
enemy army”, (*hostium exercitum*).

In 5th century texts *exercitus* is increasingly used in contexts where it is defined by the
commanding general, in a manner reminiscent of the personal loyalty of soldiers to the
dynasts of the late Republic. The Gallic Chronicler of 452 describes the actions of:
“Theodosius cum exercitu”, in 388. This can be rendered as Theodosius with an army, as
well as Theodosius with the army. Hydatius’s Chronicle discusses the revolt of Heraclianus in
413 in terms of an *exercitus* that accompanied him: a body of soldiers presumably loyal to
him. Prosper of Aquitaine does not qualify the term: “Arbogast magister exercitus”,
(Arbogast master of the/a army) or: “Castino, qui exercitui magister militum praefuit”,
(Castinus who commanded a/the army), but the juxtaposition of leading military figures and
the accompanying *exercitus* suggests the connection between the two. The term is also
used for those fighting the Romans, as shown by the Gallic Chronicler of 452 who describes
how Radagaisus divided his *exercitus* into 3 parts before they were destroyed by Stilicho in
406. *Milites* is often used as a synonym for *exercitus*, being rendered by translators as
‘soldiery’. Both Prosper and the Chronicler of 452 report the proclamation of Magnus

183 *Panegyrici Latini* VII.2.4: “Et quasi fontem humani roboris semper Romanis exercitibus ministrarunt.”
184 *Panegyrici Latini* XI.12.3.
185 *Panegyrici Latini* IV.7.4: “Illa invictum exercitum tuum.”
186 *Panegyrici Latini* XII.8.1: “Maximo hostium exercitu tenebatur.”
188 Gall. Chron. 452, 18 (388): “Theodosius cum exercitu ad Italiam transgrediens Maximum interfecit.”
189 Hydatius, 40.19: “Heraclianus mouens exercitum de Africa adversus Honorium.”
190 Prosper, Chron. 737 (392).
191 Gall. Chron. 452, 52 (405): “Cuius in tres partes per diversos principes divisus exercitus.”
Maximus of 388 in Britain “per seditionem militum” (by conspiracy of the soldiers) and “a militibus” (by the soldiers).192

*Exercitus* is therefore a collective term for a group of *milites*, rather than meaning ‘the army’ in the modern sense. The fact that neither the *magistri* nor the Emperor can be shown to have had direct command of all Roman fighting men at that point shows that using *exercitus* as a precise term describing a single organisation is futile. The political fragmentation of the Empire during the late 4th and 5th centuries saw a situation emerge analogous with the 3rd century crisis, where there were many armies operating within imperial territory. It could be argued this analysis cannot be sustained by placing so much weight on the use of technical terms in rhetorical speeches by civilians. Indeed, a deep underlying hostility to the business of war has been detected in many of these works, such as in Prosper.193 While it would be easy to dismiss panegyrical works as empty formulae and propaganda constructed to demonstrate the arcane classical knowledge of the authors rather than give a straightforward account of the events they purport to report, a blanket condemnation is too simplistic. They were composed by professional rhetors, not mere functionaries. Speeches were given with an aim at securing patronage, but were also a reflection of the opinions of the educated élite, part of constantly evolving and vital part of imperial ceremony which aimed to negotiate power between the ruler and the ruled.194 To be credible these authors had to reflect a reality that was plausible to the audience, many of whom, in official imperial occasions, would have been senior military figures.195 These texts use language that reflects a form of political and social reality, admittedly refined through an ornate literary construction, and cannot be suggested as mere artifice.

Support for this emphasis on the multiplicity of military structures in the late Roman period can be found in the surviving legal and administrative texts, which show that soldiers were divided into many different serving categories, graded by pay and status. The top grade was for those who served in the *scholae palatinae* or bodyguard regiments, which accompanied the imperial court. The *comitatus* or ‘field army’ as it is usually known had 3 orders: *palatinae, comitatenses* and *pseudocomitatenses*, the latter being *limitanei* promoted to

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192 Prosper *Chron.*, 735 (384); *Chron. 452*, 379 (Gratian 3).
195 See the interaction between military figures such as Symmachus and the general Bauto in the Altar of Victory controversy: Symmachus, *Ep.*, IV.15 – 16.
serve in the comitatus. In addition there were various castella located around the river frontiers and coasts commanded by praefecti of various units: milites, cohortes, alae and numeri. There were no palatine scholae or comitatus units in Gaul when the list was compiled in the early 5th century as the imperial court had moved to north Italy by this point. However, these units would have been present at various points in the 4th century when there were Augusti or Caesares residing there. Soldiers of course came from a variety of sources: tribes defeated in war and enrolled (dediticii) or from prisoners settled on land as farmers (laeti) for example. The Roman military system seems able to have been able to integrate these into effective fighting units, but the cultural and social mix added to the institutional complexity.

The difficulties of using surviving evidence is inevitably glossed by scholars attempting to answer queries by combing the literary sources for nuggets of information that can be used to create interpretational models. However, modern authors are accustomed to contemporary institutions that employ precise terminology to describe concrete reality. The surviving evidence for the late Roman army is often frustratingly allusive which undermines any confident conclusions. This can be seen in the case of the limitanei. The earliest, explicit use of the term is from 363, but the earliest reference to the concept of soldiers being defined by the frontier where they served is found in a law of 325 in the Codex Theodosianus which refers to riparenses – or river bank soldiers. Whether this is a technical term, or merely a description of where the soldiers were stationed is unclear. Isaac has argued that the term limes is an administrative term in the 4th century that describes a frontier zone under the command of a dux and is not a ‘defended border’ or frontier, which is often how it is understood by moderns obsessed with identifying formal administrative boundaries. It makes sense to elide these two terms together as representing the same

196 M. Nicasie, Twilight of Empire: the Roman army from the reign of Diocletian until the Battle of Adrianople (Amsterdam, 1998), p. 17.
197 Notitia Dignitatum, Occ. VII, 63-111; 166-178.
198 Cod. Th., 12.1.56 (363); C. Th., 7.20.4 (325).
phenomenon, and while this may well be correct, one should not fail to acknowledge the inbuilt assumptions of such an approach. This lack of precision illustrates how many Latin terms are liable to miscomprehension by giving them anachronistic definitions that are not warranted by the context. When one attempts to reconstruct the army’s institutional structures, one can easily knit the fragmentary and problematic evidence into a tidy narrative that may fail to appreciate that changes could have been very ad hoc and messy. The huge variety of different titles used by limitanei units that are recorded in the Notitia Dignitatum indicates that the term is simply a convenient label grouping together army units in a similar location rather than representing a new strategic doctrine.

This issue also applies to the comitatenses, which are often glossed in the literature as ‘mobile field armies.’ Constantine is often given the credit for their creation, while others stress the importance of precedents found under Diocletian and the Tetrarchs. However these scholarly constructs can move the discussion away from the original meaning. The term was coined in reference to inscriptions that described the soldier: “In the sacred comitatus.” The term is explicitly attested for Diocletian in the Acts of Maximilianus, where two soldiers are said to serve: “In the sacred comitatus of our Lords Diocletian and Maximian.” Similarly, the Abinnaeus archive from Egypt discusses recruits being sent: “To the comitatus”. Selective quotation could imply there is more institutional coherence to ‘the’ comitatus than is apparent elsewhere. The term comitatenses is derived from comites and comitatus – the entourage, or ‘court’ accompanying the emperor as he moved around the Empire hence soldiers were part of the comitatus rather than being the comitatus. The term is also used in civilian contexts. An archivist (adiutor memoriae), was granted rations while: “Returning to the sacred comitatus of Maximianus Caesar (Galerius)”, in 293. As Le Bohec has recently argued, “mobile field armies”, are a figment of historical

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200 A. Jones, op. cit., p. 621, credits Constantine with the significant reform but acknowledges that this built on Diocletian’s creation of a mobile force.
201 E.g. ILS 2781: “Lectus in sacro comit(atu) lanciarius.”
203 H.I. Bell, ed., The Abinnaeus archive: papers of a Roman officer in the reign of Constantine II (Oxford, 1962), P. Abbin. 19, where it is contrasted explicitly with local service.
imagination since the 19th century and our texts are referencing military units’ social position rather than their institutional role.\footnote{Y. Le Bohec, ‘Limitanei et comitatenses: Critique de la thèse attribuée à Théodor Mommsen’, \textit{Latomus}, LXVI.3 (2007), pp. 659-672.}

Again, one could criticise the present argument as putting too much weight on semantics. The evidence on the army recorded by Ammianus and Vegetius appears more functional and descriptive than the material discussed so far. This would suggest that the Roman military had a clear internal sense of institutional coherence. Senior officers were able to move easily between different parts of the Empire to take charge of local military forces. Ursicinus, the \textit{magister equitum} under whom Ammianus served as a \textit{protector} during the 350s, was moved from command in the East under Gallus to the West where he was sent to Gaul to assassinate Silvanus before returning to the East to face the Persian invasion of 359.\footnote{J.F. Matthews, \textit{The Roman Empire of Ammianus} (London, 1989), pp. 33-47.} The Gallic commanders amongst Julian’s army that invaded Persia in 363, who are found debating the succession, Nevitta and Dagalaifu, illustrate an institutional coherence that must have existed for the Roman army to be militarily effective.\footnote{Ammianus Marcellinus, \textit{Res Gestae}, XXV.5.2.} Imperial coinage used a variety of terms appealing to the “\textit{exercitus}” in its coinage, which shows an attempt to support and sustain a corporate identity on that most crucial of elements: pay.\footnote{The Trier mint issued a series of gold coins through the 4th century with the legend, “Gloria Exercitus,” see J. Pearce, \textit{Valentinian I to Theodosius I RIC IX} (London, 1961), p. 126; “Virtus Exercitus,” see J. Pearce \textit{op. cit.}, p. 19; Constantine also released a silver coin in 309, “Virtus Exercitus Gall(iarum),” which shows a more localized appeal - see P. Brunn, \textit{Constantine and Licinius, A.D. 313-337 RIC VIII} (London, 1966), p. 223.}

While this is a reasonable point, operational co-operation can surely work within a general military ‘culture’ rather than having to be accounted for by a singular institution. We should therefore think of there being many Roman armies in the late antique world rather than discussing ‘the’ Roman army. Military identity was a function of the way each particular unit interacted with the imperial supply networks and their political loyalty to the imperial dynasty. The central authority usually co-ordinated myriad local forces by controlling official appointments, and direct command was usually only exercised in the presence of an emperor. One can speculate that this resulted in considerable local autonomy and variety, which is why we must now look at regional dynamics.
1.4 Regionalism and local identities

There was a strong dynamic within the military structures of the Empire that could be described as ‘localism.’ An excellent illustration of the local ties that soldiers developed in the 4th century can be seen in the appeal to the Caesar Julian by Constantius II for reinforcements for his forces fighting the Persians in 359. Julian argued that volunteers from across the Rhine would not serve if they had to be moved to the east.\textsuperscript{210} The threat to their families from the Alamanni spread around the soldiers of the Petulantes at Paris when they were told of the plans to move them, and this led to their request for public transport to move their loved ones to safety.\textsuperscript{211} Too much weight can be placed on this anecdote. It is part of Ammianus’ literary justification of Julian’s usurpation in 360: by making Constantius’ requests seem unreasonable it excuses the Caesar’s treason.\textsuperscript{212} Some of Ammianus’ anecdotal evidence appears to have been based on his own experiences. He describes tensions during the siege of Amida between eastern soldiers and those from Gaul, created by their different tactical inclinations, which indicates the existence of local military cultures.\textsuperscript{213} Claudian talks of the distinct eastern and Gallic military traditions in the context of Stilicho’s control over the armies of Theodosius combining the forces of the eastern Empire with those which followed Eugenius and Arbogast in 394.\textsuperscript{214}

Another example of a tendency for soldiers to integrate into provinces are the limitanei who MacMullen viewed as becoming mere peasant-soldiers completely integrated into local society: a militia of part-time farmers supported by the land they were given by the state.\textsuperscript{215} This view has been vigorously challenged. The evidence of the Codex Theodosianus, for example, states that limitanei were given land grants on their retirement, which seems odd if they already held land as their primary means of subsistence.\textsuperscript{216} The limited surviving evidence also suggests that they were subject to military discipline in the same way as ‘regular’ soldiers were. The Notitia Dignitatum lists 17 units under the Magister Peditum

\textsuperscript{210} Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, XX,4.4.
\textsuperscript{211} Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, XX,4.4; 10-11.
\textsuperscript{212} J. F. Matthews, The Roman Empire of Ammianus, (London, 1989), pp. 93 – 100
\textsuperscript{213} Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, XIX.6.
\textsuperscript{214} Claudian, Contra Rufinum, II.100 – 116.
\textsuperscript{215} R. MacMullen, Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 47 – 68.
\textsuperscript{216} A. Jones, op. cit., (1964), pp. 649 – 655; supported by P. Southern and K. Dixon, The Late Roman Army (London, 1996), pp. 35-37; see also Justinian’s code (CJ 12.35.15): it is forbidden for soldiers “who get their arms and supplies from the state” to work in the fields or herd animals.
Praesentalis in the west who are called pseudo-comitatenses who were transferred to the central military command from the frontier, which presumably means they remained mobile and battle worthy.\textsuperscript{217} Written accounts of the battle of Mursa in 351 mention large cavalry numbers that could only have been drafted from frontier units.\textsuperscript{218} Scholarly orthodoxy holds that limitanei remained a well trained professional force until the 6\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{219}

Laeti have also been suggested to be part of the ‘soldier-farmer’ paradigm. There is no consensus on what they actually are. Possible suggestions include that they represented provincial populations reclaimed from captivity by barbarian raiders in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century; they could be settlements of people from outside the Empire brought in as prisoners after Imperial campaigns or they could be groups who moved in on a formal basis and were given land in response for promises of loyalty, and made liable for taxation and recruitment.\textsuperscript{220} They were probably communities of farmers liable for military service, but covered a broad range of different phenomenon. Foederati are another group who have engendered enormous debate, but given the shortage of space, all that will be said about them is that they reflect the variety of different arrangements that could exist within the Roman ‘military’ network.\textsuperscript{221}

\textsuperscript{217} ND Occ. V. 257-274 (ed. Seeck), which is supported strongly by B. Isaac, The Limits of Empire (Oxford, 1992), pp. 208-9.
\textsuperscript{218} D. Hoffmann, Das Spätromische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum (Dusselfdorf, 1969), pp. 193-4. This is also related to the argument that cavalry units were more likely to be found amongst ‘limitanei’ given that cavalry are less mobile over long distances and periods of time. Infantry are easier to maintain in good order, so make up the bulk of the ‘mobile armies’. See M. Whitby, ‘Emperors and Armies’, in S. Swain and M. Edwards, eds., Approaching Late Antiquity: The Transformation from the early to the late Empire (Oxford, 2006), pp. 156 – 186.
\textsuperscript{220} C.J. Simpson, ‘Laeti in Northern Gaul: A Note on Pan. Lat. VIII.21’, Latomus 36 (1977), 169 – 70, argues that the word order in the Latin text and its juxtaposition with “Francus” reflects a belief on the part of the panegyricist that they were discussing a particular tribal group rather than a legal definition of a heterogeneous group. Simpson argues that this legal meaning may have evolved later, but is not part of the origin of the group. This is developed in C. J. Simpson, ‘Julian and the Laeti: A Note on Ammianus Marcellinus XX, 8, 13’, Latomus, 36 (1977 [2]), 519-521, where he argues that the Laeti despatched by Julian to Constantius II are a distinct group within the Empire who maintained their tribal identity. Simpson has changed his argument 10 years later when he argues that they are in fact part of the mainstream military network and do not exist as independent barbarian groups or irregular militias C. J Simpson, ‘Laeti in the Notitia Dignitatum. “Regular” Soldiers vs. "Soldier-Farmers", Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire, 66 (1988), 80 – 85.
\textsuperscript{221} Most recent authors stress the range of different arrangements that result from the ‘foederati.’ P. Heather stresses that in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century the Roman state was very much with the whip hand in their relationship – see P. Heather, ‘Foederata et foederati of the fourth century’, in T.F.X. Noble op. cit., (2006), pp. 292-308.
The impact of localism can be exaggerated if it is argued to represent an inevitable integration of soldiers into provincial social networks. The late Roman state raised its manpower and fulfilled its military functions through a variety of local expedients that would have contributed to a heterogeneous military force, and underlines again how particular unit traditions and routines would have been crucial in constructing an individual miles sense of themselves, which would have taken place within the overarching background of imperial pay and command structures. It is likely that there was considerable tension between these dynamic cultural forces, particularly given the vicissitudes of imperial politics in late Roman Gaul.

1.5 Change in the 5th century

The 5th century was a turning point for the Roman army. There is plenty of evidence can be drawn from the compilations of historical materials by the 5th century chroniclers which offer a supporting contemporary perspective. Hydatius, writing in Spain, can be quite generalised when he discusses military affairs. He refers to military victories of late 4th century Emperors in the most general of terms, e.g.: “Creothingorum gens a Theodosio superatur”.222 This also applies in the case of civil war e.g.: “Eugenius a Theodosio Augusto superatus occiditur”.223 Similarly, other 5th century leading generals in Gaul such as Aetius are given quite general notices: “Aetio duce et magistro militum Burgundiorum caesa XX milia”.224 This could be argued to demonstrate a more amorphous military structure existed than was the case in the 4th century. Another example can be made by comparing the accounts of Magnus Maximus’ usurpation in 383 in two 5th century annals, Prosper Tiro and the ‘Chronicler of 452’ with that of the later ‘Chronicler of 511’. Both use the term milites when explaining the usurpation as a result of a mutiny by soldiers, but the ‘Chronicler of 511’ does not mention milites at all.225 This could be a stylistic choice by the author, but also could be due to the fact that milites as a distinct social group did not make sense to an author in the early 6th century, as it still did in the first half of the 5th century.

From the perspective of Gaul, there is clear evidence that a set of military identities, which appear quite traditional, continued to exist at the beginning of the 5th century amongst the

222 Hydatius, Chronicle, 76: “The people of the Greuthungi were defeated by Theodosius”.
223 ibid., 78: “Eugenius was defeated and killed by Theodosius Augustus”.
224 ibid., 94: “The dux and Magister Militum Aetius slaughtered twenty thousand Burgundians”.
225 Prosper Tiro, Chron. (c. 1183, AD 384); Gall. Chron. 452 (OL.CCXC.III); Gall. Chron. 511, 3.517.
civilian élite. Sulpicius Severus’ Vita Sancti Martini shows how the separation of the military class from the civilian population continued to be a real distinction. Martin’s military service in the elite scholae seems to have drawn critical comment, as Sulpicius appears to be defending his subject. He writes that Martin entered the military unwillingly, preferring an ecclesiastical or contemplative role, and only did so because his father forced him to join by betraying him to the authorities! Martin’s behaviour as a soldier, his humility when dealing with his military slave, and other good deeds such as the famous donation of half his military cloak (vestem militiae) to a beggar outside the gates of Amiens, clearly aimed to demonstrate how even a soldier may live a Christian life: “(He) behaved like a candidate for Baptism.”

Sulpicius even manipulates the chronology of Martin’s military service moving it from the time of Constantine and his sons to the late 350s under Julian, which is impossible given the evidence of Sulpicius’ own writings and other sources on Martin. Julian’s appearance allows Sulpicius to show Martin standing up to the great imperial adversary to Christians, in the manner of military martyrologies and therefore exculpate Martin’s professional background. It is from this apologetic standpoint that Sulpicius introduces the idea of caelestis militia, which permits the acceptability of military service for a Christian. This clearly indicates that late 4th century readers would readily know who was a miles and who was not. This is confirmed by other saints’ lives from the early 5th century.

More support for this persistence of a recognisable military identity comes from the Gallic author of Querolus, a comedic play written in the first decades of the 5th century, which may have been dedicated to the famous poet Rutilius Claudius Namatianus. The character Querolus, discussing what destiny he would choose for his life with his lar familiaris, comments on the desirability of choosing wealth and military honours (honores militares). The lar questions Querolus’ suitability for such a profession: “Can you wage a campaign, parry a sword, break through a battle line?.... Therefore yield the booty and honours to

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226 Sulpicius Severus, Vita Martini, II.8: “Agebat quemdam bonis operibus baptismatis candidatum”. For the donation to the beggar see Vita Martini, III.1-2.
229 See for example Possidius, Vita Augustini, where soldiers appear on several occasions.
those that can!”. While the author of Querolus makes no institutional assumption in this comment, that only a Roman miles, should be undertaking such tasks, the assumption that lies behind the text is that serving in the military required technical skill and specialisation that an individual that could not merely pick up on a whim. Hence comments about the disappearance of distinctions between soldiers and civilians are not applicable in a general sense here.

There is also continuity into the 5th century of the distinctive rhetorical context that we identified for milites in the previous sections, which is best illustrated by the official writings of Sidonius Apollinaris. In the 450s Sidonius could still draw a clear distinction between the military and civilian aspects of government by admitting that the Emperor Majorian needed to learn about the civil arts of government, having already mastered the military side. The trinity of signa-castra-bella discussed above continues as a clear defining structure for the literary representation of militia well into the 5th century. Sidonius uses the term signa and castra several times, for example, to describe military activity. He describes Julius Caesar’s armies in terms of their standards. In discussing the army that Majorian assembled in northern Italy to move into Gaul, Sidonius describes the scene: “Now you (Majorian) were moving camp and thousands were thronging around your standards.” Sidonius is still using these terms in the panegyric to Anthemius in the late 460s. He discusses one of the Emperor’s campaigns where: “Following your standards the soldiers felt they had not been deserted in the struggle”. The Theodosian Code also defines milites spatially as being identified with castra. For example in an edict issued in the early 5th century at Ravenna in the discussion of exemptions to the levying of supplies of recruits and horses militares were not permitted to claim their exemption if: “They have no experience of military camp”.

Similarly a precise identity of the Roman miles retains a clear meaning in the sources. Aetius is described as being reliant on a clearly limited pool of milites: “Aetius was disheartened to

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231 Querolus, II.29: “Potes bellum gerere, ferrum expicere, aciem rumpere?.... cede igitur praemio atque honoribus his quo possunt omnia.”
232 Sidonius, Carmen V (Ad Maiorianum), 297: “Ne solem militis artem.”
233 Sidonius, Carmen VII.88-9: “Victoria Caesar signa Caledonios transvexit ad usque Brittanos,” not “legions” as Anderson renders it.
234 Sidonius, Carmen V. 483-4: “Iam castra movebas et te diversis stipabant milia signis”.
235 Sidonius, Carmen II. 286-7.: “Tua signa secutus non se desertum sensit certamine miles”.
236 Cod. Th., 11.18.1 (409/12 Ravenna).
Sidonius can distinguish between milites and other non-Roman soldiers, fighting for Rome (auxilia) when describing Aetius crossing of the Alps from Italy in 439 to deal with the Visigoths: “Aetius had scarce left the Alps, leading a thin, meagre force of auxiliaries without (Roman) soldiers”. This is supported by the Novel of Valentinian III issued in 440 at Rome where the threat of attack from the Vandals would be resisted by milites commanded by Sigisvult, the Magister Militum, who are distinguished from the foederati (federated allies) who were also there. The context is also important here, as Valentinian is asking local citizens to help resist any attack: “The regulation is made for the safety of all that they shall undertake the responsibility of resisting the brigands.” The Novel stresses the exceptional circumstances of this law and it is clear that the traditional identity of the miles was still being articulated in the middle of the 5th century.

As we have stressed so far, one cannot simply take the information at face value. The language of rhetorical sources is deliberately archaic, reflecting the stress on earlier model classical works which were taught in the late Roman schools. The fact that Sidonius’s panegyric to Majorian reflects the language of the Panegyricist of Maximian in 289 should be no surprise given that Sidonius probably read the published collection of Panegyrici Latini at some point in his education. That Sidonius’s language shows continuity of form probably reflects attempts to deal with a rapidly changing world by pretending things were the same. Sidonius was not averse to manipulating his writing to present reality in the way that suited him at that time, as can be seen by his presentation of Theodoric II as an idealised Roman ruler. The political contexts of his speeches are also important. He portrays Avitus possessing all the traditional military virtues of a Roman male, there is an implicit comparison of Avitus to Roman military heroes such as Cincinnatus when he describes his recall from a life of otium to serve with Aetius against the Huns in 451. What Sidonius was doing was consciously playing down the fact that Avitus was raised to the purple through the military support of Theodoric II and the Visigoths. The audience for Sidonius’ speech

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237 Sidonius, Carmen VII.299-300: “Nil prece, nil pretio, nil milite fractus agebat Aetius”.
238 Sidonius, Carmen VII.328-9: “Vix liquerat Alpes Aetius, tenue at rarum sine milite ducens robur in auxiliis”.
239 See above p. 48.
240 Nov. Val. 9 Restoration of the right to use weapons (De reddito jure armorum).
242 Sidonius Apollinaris, Ep. 1.2.
and Valentinian’s edict were therefore part of an élite discourse that reflected the opinions of those at the centre of imperial administration, which of course wished to portray an unchanging continuity.

However, while such qualifications on the use of these texts are important, it is too simplistic to simply dismiss them. The concepts still had to be plausible and comprehensible for their audience. There is also evidence from other sources that give some credence to Sidonius’ claim of ‘business as usual.’ The 5th century chroniclers give support for the continuation of a distinctive Roman military identity and structure in their brief entries on events of the 5th century. Prosper Tiro wrote in Rome from the 430s to the 450s, so one could argue his perspective is as restrictive as Sidonius, but he was from the southern half of Gaul so shared a similar background. In the entry for 423 he discusses Castinus’ support for the usurper John: “Honorius died and John took his imperial power with the connivance, so it was believed, of Castinus who controlled an army”. A magister militum commanding an exercitus is consistent with Roman practice in the 4th century. Similarly, the account of 424 recounts the murder of a Praetorian Prefect by milites: “Exuperantius of Poitiers the Praetorian Prefect of Gaul was killed by a riot of the soldiers, and this deed was not avenged by John”. There is a degree of hostility to the military – both generals and soldiers - in Prosper’s work which is very resonant of the attitude of Aurelius Victor in the mid-4th century discussed in the previous section.

There is further support for the notion of a recognisably ‘Roman’ military system operating in the first half of the 5th century. Aetius’s comes Litorius is described as using his cavalry to transport 2 measures of wheat into the city of Narbonne, implying the continued existed and importance of the centralised supply network. There is also support from the Gallic Chronicler of 452 whose language reflects what is found in Prosper, and from a Gallic

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245 Prosper Tiro, Chron. 1282 (423): “Honorius moritur et imperium eius Iohannes occupant conivente, ut putabatur, Castino, qui exercitui magister militum praeterat.”
246 Prosper Tiro, Chron. 1285 (424): “Exuperantius Pictavus praefectus praetorio Galliarum in civitate Arelatene militum seditione occisus est, idque apud Iohannem inultum fuit.”
247 S Muhlberger, The Fifth Century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius, and the Gallic Chronicler of 452 (Leeds, 1990), p. 94. Prosper does have good things to say about Boniface, but this was probably due to his connection with Augustine. See also the more ambivalent attitude to Aetius, influenced undoubtedly by his political ascendancy in the period, Muhlberger, ibid., p. 98.
248 Prosper Tiro, Chron. 1324 (436): “Si quidem per singulos equites binis tritici modii adventis strenuissime et hostes in fugam verterit et civitatem annona impleret.”
The Chronicler doesn’t simply mimic Prosper, having a more sympathetic view of Aetius, for example, but also has less interest and knowledge about political affairs so we are left with the problem of our views being shaped by people outside military contexts. One important point that appears in these sources is the geographical focus in the south of Gaul, indicating a shift in the centre of gravity in Roman military/political action from the Rhineland into Narbonensis and Aquitaine. What is clear is that the context of Roman military operations shifted in the 5th century and this is the significant point, as there was no longer a clear settled frontier zone where a military culture could evolve gradually.

While an argument can be made for continuity of traditional Roman military communities through the 5th century, there must be a point at which there is a break with continuity otherwise the term ‘Roman’ is meaningless. The evidence presented so far is more suggestive than conclusive. A key text that supports a fundamental change in the nature of the Roman military is Vegetius’s *Epitoma Rei Militaris*, which calls for a return to traditional Roman military practices in recruitment, training and equipment that were used during the Republican and early Imperial periods. Vegetius describes how in his time Roman provincials have been siphoned off into easier civilian careers, while soldiers have lost many of the traditional skills that made them distinct. This is clear in his famous comment that the soldiers had successfully lobbied to have their armour removed: “Thus with their chests and heads unprotected our soldiers have often been destroyed in engagements with the Goths through the multitude of their archers.”

Vegetius has long been recognised to be arguing for an end to reliance on ‘barbarian’ troops, usually identified as *foederati*, upon whom the Emperor addressed by the work is increasingly reliant. He clearly implies that there was a clear distinction of who was a Roman soldier was and who wasn’t. The problem is how far Vegetius can be taken at face value given that he was a mélange of antiquarian and romantic reactionary. It is hard to deny that he is not describing something fundamental except by dismissing him entirely on the basis that his conclusions don’t agree with my own ideas. Vegetius’ evidence does seem more persuasive than the evidence presented above.

251 Vegetius, *Epitome*: I.20.2 “*Sic detectis pectoribus et capitis congressi contra Gothos milites nostri multitudine sagittariorum saepe deleti sunt.*”
in that it seems directly focused on the contemporary military circumstances, but this could be misleading. Vegetius’s writing was still part of a civilian genre, which produced works for the Emperor’s attention recommending reform in the various spheres of government, similar to the author of De Rebus Bellicis. This writing was as drenched in the rhetorical culture of government functionaries as the writings of the lawyers and panegyricists discussed above. Vegetius is perhaps best seen as the other side of the rhetorical coin, which sought to pass ideas upwards rather than proclaim imperial decisions to the world.

The dating of Vegetius is difficult to establish with precision, but was probably between 383 and 450 on account of the reference to divus Gratianus and a subscriptio dating a manuscript to the consular year of its copying. Establishing a reasonable timeframe is crucial as its opinions underpin interpretations of Roman military organisation in the 5th century. Several authors have ascribed a date during the reign of Theodosius I. This is based on arguments suggesting the text reflects the losses of Adrianople in 378, circumstantial details such as the mention of divus Gratianus who died in 383, and Vegetius’ silence on the Vandals. Such details can be explained and the connection with Theodosius and Adrianople is a circular argument, based on the limited information we have of his military policies. If one takes a more circumspect view, the most compelling internal evidence tends to support a western context and the reign of Valentinian III, a position strongly supported by Charles. Vegetius’ claim that infantry were no longer wearing body armour finds no support in any contemporary evidence from the end of the 4th century or the early 5th century. Charles interprets this as referring to ‘federate’ troops who were equipped in traditional ‘barbarian’ manner – i.e. no armour or helmet. This, he argues, is far more in line with the situation of the 430s/440s than anything before. This view seems far more persuasive than an earlier dating, though as ever with Vegetius, there is an element of circularity. The ‘military crisis’ which Vegetius appears to be addressing is more compatible with cumulative effects from the various crises that afflicted the western half of the Empire in the first few decades of the 5th century, rather than being a response to long-term trends such as the ‘barbarisation’ of the Roman army during the 4th century, a concept which has

252 M. Charles, Vegetius in context: establishing the date of the Epitoma rei Militaris (Stuttgart, 2007), pp. 16 – 22.
254 M. Charles, ibid.
been challenged.\textsuperscript{255} If this dating is correct this supports the idea of there being a considerable amount of continuity in Roman military structures through the first half of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century, and that the changes we can identify at the end of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century in the west are therefore most likely due to the deeper structural transformations the western Empire underwent in the 5\textsuperscript{th} century.

The 5\textsuperscript{th} century could be argued to represent a re-militarisation of Roman provincial society. Roman civilians were forced to organise their own security and did so by raising armies of private dependants (\textit{servulos suos ex propriis praedidis}) as in the examples of Didymus and Verinianus in Spain in 409.\textsuperscript{256} This changed the military system as the previous central relationship between \textit{miles} and Emperor was replaced by one between the local leader and his followers. The rise of the \textit{buccellarii} (biscuit-men), whose loyalty was a personal one to their generals, has been argued to represent the basis of a proto-feudal system.\textsuperscript{257} C.R. Whittaker sees this change as being part of wider transformation in the frontier societies of the Empire where the distinctions between soldiers and landlords disappeared and merged into ‘warlords.’\textsuperscript{258} The Roman state tried to maintain a monopoly of violence by limiting the use of arms to its own servants, but this was no longer possible in the 5\textsuperscript{th} century. It is arguable whether this was anything more than an aspiration, but the 5\textsuperscript{th} century (as with the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century crisis) saw the ability of Roman power to maintain this monopoly slowly ebb away. Local communities increasingly had to manage their own security, though the opportunity to maintain a connection with the central imperial authority was possible.\textsuperscript{259} Van Dam has argued, persuasively, that the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 5\textsuperscript{th} century both saw local élites emerging to fill the political vacuum left by failing imperial power to provide protection and security.\textsuperscript{260} The use of terms such as ‘\textit{bagaudae}’ to describe the various local movements are best seen as labels of abuse by the imperial centre used against groups acting with autonomy, to the frustration of the centre’s viewpoint, rather than describing historical phenomena such as slave and peasant revolts, as ‘\textit{bagaudae}’ have often been taken to

\textsuperscript{256} Orosius, \textit{Historiarum Adversum Paganos Septem Libri} VII.40.6.
\textsuperscript{259} \textit{Nov. Val.} 9, Restoration of the right to use weapons (\textit{De reddito jure armorum}).
\textsuperscript{260} R. Van Dam, \textit{Leadership and Community in Late Roman Gaul} (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 25 – 58.
However one takes the meaning of this, there can be no doubt that one of the defining characteristics of the 5th century that marks such a significant change to the 4th century was the different number of armed groups that were found within the Gallic provinces.

In a similar vein, the lack of imperial military forces that could be called upon to implement decisions could explain the use of an: “Armed band”, (manus armata) by Hilarius, the bishop of Arles, to remove bishops he claimed that had been appointed without his metropolitan authority. Indeed: “He either encircled the enclosures of the walls by a siege, in the manner of an enemy, or he opened them by an attack.” In fact this view would be to fall into a trap, created by the invective of the incident. It is clear that Hilarius’ manus had a more official role from Pope Leo’s letter when he describes it as a: “Manus militaris”. The fact that Valentinian’s edict was addressed to Aetius himself implies that Hilarius was actually supported by the civil and military authorities in Arles and they were acting in a more formal, traditional manner. So evidence that appears to represent a new world can be reinterpreted as continuity of traditional Roman structures.

These armed groups no longer had any automatic loyalty to the Emperor: increasingly an isolated figure in Italy during the first half of the 5th century. As discussed above the process the sources appear to describe show an exercitus or milites increasingly defined by the general who commanded them. In the case of the various ‘barbarian’ groups in Gaul this would be their rex. This pattern is often discussed in terms of the buccellarii, who according to Olympiodorus appeared in the early 5th century, and was a name applied to Roman as well as Gothic troops. They certainly seem to have been given a more formal

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262 Nov. Val. 17.1 (445) This incident is shrouded in difficulties as the Edict preserved in Valentinian’s Novels are from the perspective of Rome in a partisan dispute over ecclesiastical jurisdiction, so the discussion of ‘armed bands’ is unlikely to be free of invective.


265 See above, p. 47.

266 T. Burns, Barbarians within the Gates of Rome (Bloomington, 1994), pp. 179-82

role in the eastern Roman armies of the 5th and 6th centuries, but this is a comment on the continued flexibility of the Roman imperial system that could incorporate disparate bodies of men into its service.

The most famous was the group of soldiers brought by Titus from Gaul to serve the Emperor Leo who was subsequently appointed *comes*.

The fact that Titus was given a formal title within Leo’s military structure is interesting. Bringing these effective, well trained forces into the army structure was, again, nothing new to Roman practice. The example of Charietto from the mid-4th century is similar. His band of irregulars attacked hostile raiding groups in provincial territories, though: “As he did not, however, have permission to do this and the task had not been legally entrusted to him, at first he concealed himself alone”. Julian later enrolled Charietto’s band into his forces and formalised this by appointing the leader as *comes per utramque Germaniam*.

One must be careful using these anecdotes to illustrate general trends. The story of Titus could be part of a rhetorical device by the hagiographer aiming to show how Titus exchanged the impermanence of imperial service with the far more rewarding divine version. The story of Charietto probably derives from Eunapius and does seem to part of a wider paean to Julian, whose qualities of leadership were illustrated by his handling of Charietto. It is doubtful whether Eunapius and the hagiographer of Daniel the Stylite can be relied upon for a deep understanding of the contemporary situation in Gaul.

However, it is important to recognise the continuing strength of the Roman idea in organising and controlling violence. To discuss the ‘rise of the generals’ in the 5th century west as an inevitable and irreversible process by which *milites* become retainers of leading figures is a dangerous teleology. Essentially, the local administrative structures that survived continued as best it could traditional practices. This can also be seen in parts of Gaul frontier region, where a defensive organisation descended from the 4th century

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268 Life of Daniel the Stylite, 62-4; PLRE II, Titus 1.
269 Zosimus, Historia Nova, 7.2.
271 J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, ‘Warlords and Landlords’, in P. Erdkamp, ed., A Companion to the Roman Army (Oxford, 2007), pp. 481-3, discusses the political supremacy of generals from Merobaudes to Ricimer alongside the process by which military leaders moved from being *magistri militum* to being made kings of peoples. There is clearly a great deal of sense in Liebeschuetz’ arguments, but it does underestimate the role of chance – a series of unmilitary emperors in the House of Theodosius – and underplay the energy with which Avitus, Majorian and Anthemius tried to remedy the situation. The fact that they thought doing so was conceivable is of significance.
military apparatus is maintained using local resources. The Life of Saint Severinus in 5th century Noricum is a celebrated image of the last Roman soldiers fulfilling their traditional functions. When the surviving soldiers of Batavis (modern Passau) are sent to Ravenna to get their pay, they are massacred by the hostile Rugii tribe. Eugippius refers to the time of ‘Roman power’ when milites were maintained at public expense for the protection of boundaries (multorum milites oppidorum pro custodia limitis publicis stipendiis alebantu) of the civilians. This text can be read two ways – either the soldiers were maintained at public expense in the traditional manner, and the account of them sending to Ravenna for pay would seem to confirm this. Or, multorum milites oppidorum can be read as the soldiers were recruited and paid by the cities themselves.

There is a sense that the crucial aspect of change in the 5th century was the disappearance of an ability to absorb armed groups into the centralised political structures. The landscape was now filled with a patchwork of different armies and armed groups, whose identity and loyalty to the Emperor were varied. Several authors have referred to this as ‘warlordism’ in the sense that these military figures became politically dominant in their own areas, which they ran in the manner of a protection racket. It is possible to have some sympathy for this view, especially when expressed with such eloquence by Liebeschuetz and Whittaker, but it downplays excessively the continuing importance of the Roman military culture argued for by Amory.

1.6 Conclusion

The argument advanced so far supports a growing trend in Roman military research. “The reality of ‘the army’, insofar as it existed at all, lay in ‘the soldiers’ themselves, as a social grouping and a real, self-aware force in Roman society.” We should analyse soldiers as a

273 Eugippus, Vita Sancti Severini, XX: “Per idem tempus, quo Romanum constabat imperium, multorum milites oppidorum pro custodia limitis publicis stipendiis alebantu.” The degree to which Eugippus understood the workings of the earlier army is uncertain, though contemporary experience of the military arrangements of Constantinople may have given him his knowledge – certainly the stationing of troops as garrisons to protect local settlements is a key feature of 6th century defense policy. However the use of technical language like stipendia does imply some technical awareness though that was not necessarily the purpose of hagiographical texts.
social class, within which individual soldiers were part of multiple local sub-communities within a wider empire-wide military community, from which identities were created in a fluid and multifaceted way. \textsuperscript{275} Theoretical approaches from across the humanities stress the complexity of recreating identities from the textual and material evidence. The crucial conclusion from the textual analysis in this chapter is that this approach allows us to suggest the evolution of military identities from the 3\textsuperscript{rd} to the 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries, but also suggest that the interpretational dichotomies of integration and separation are inadequate. A universalising concept of \textit{militia} was abstract enough to be used by different cultural contexts, but resilient enough to underpin the relationship of the increasingly diverse armed groups that served imperial military interests. A particular Roman military ‘structure’ or ‘culture’ appears in the written sources with a regularity so that it can be argued with some confidence that provincial inhabitants of Gaul could identify a \textit{miles}, whether he fought for Rome or not.

This is not to say that things were the same in the period under investigation. The collapse of Roman political hegemony was a fact that impacted the people living through it. The Roman government lost its monopoly on force and alternative armed groups began to challenge the military supremacy of the Roman state. This was driven largely by the fragmentation of the fiscal system in the 5\textsuperscript{th} century, which made it difficult for the Roman state to maintain its political and economic hegemony. \textsuperscript{276} However, the process was always potentially reversible and the various attempts by western rulers from Constantius III onwards should not be dismissed. One could argue that Roman armies continued to operate in Gaul until the defeat of Anthemius in 471. \textsuperscript{277} These changes saw a transformation and adaptation of traditional concepts of \textit{militia} to serve the new situations, which could only be rationalised by the educated classes through references to the past.


\textsuperscript{276} For summary of the debate over barbarian settlement and the tax system of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century see G.Halsall, \textit{Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West 376-568} (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 422 – 447

\textsuperscript{277} Gallic Chronicler of 511, 649.
Chapter 2: Archaeology & the material evidence for the Late Roman Army

The case study attempts to define what is meant by a ‘military assemblage’ in the Late Roman period and answer the issue of how far one can identify *milites* in the material record. This is important not only in terms of the artefacts themselves, but also in classifying the large variety of different fortifications built across northern France and establishing how far, and for how long, civilian and military communities remained distinct. This chapter discusses some of the fundamental methodological issues underpinning the use of material evidence in reconstructing the military cultures of *Belgica* II.

2.1 Material and written records

The fragmentary nature of the written evidence makes any model created from it a composite and artificial one. Taking evidence from a range of different genres across a wide geographical and chronological spectrum in a synchronic manner makes it very difficult to create anything that would reflect reality specific to one point in time and space.\(^{278}\) The material evidence provided by archaeology has its own problems – both theoretical and practical – but it does have the advantage of allowing one to test the ideas raised in chapter 1 in the case study. A major methodological problem facing the interpretation of material evidence is attempting to fit it into a historical framework provided by literary sources.\(^{279}\) Archaeologists tend to be suspicious of frameworks constructed from written sources, while historians are frustrated by archaeological models built on theory.\(^{280}\) This can be illustrated by the example of Paris in the mid-4th century. This site has relatively abundant literary evidence. Ammianus discusses the city in some detail in the context of occupation by both Julian and Valentinian, and the usurpation of Julian in 360 meant the city was of interest to


\(^{280}\) The suspicion of written records is very commonly associated with practitioners of processual (or ‘New’) archaeology such as Lewis Binford, who argued that archaeology should aspire to describe general aspects of human behaviour and behave more like a science: L. R. Binford, *An Archaeological Perspective* (New York, 1972). For a critique of fitting a material record the ‘agenda’ created by documentary historians see D. Austin, ‘The ‘Proper Study’ of medieval archaeology’, in D. Austin and L. Alcock, eds., *From the Baltic to the Black Sea: Studies in Medieval Archaeology* (London, 1990), pp. 43 – 78.
several authors including Julian himself. Current archaeological research suggests that by the 4th century urban occupation levels were reduced and concentrated into several areas of the early imperial city. The Île de la Cité was surrounded by a fortified wall which has been argued to represent the residence of the imperial administration, possibly to the exclusion of those of lower official status. The western part of the island possessed a regular rectangular design, which could be the palatium referred to by Ammianus. During Julian’s proclamation as Augustus in 360, several regiments are recorded as being stationed in the city, though their location is impossible to locate with any precision. Officers, whom Julian entertained to a banquet, returned to their ‘quarters’ according to Ammianus. The Petulantes and Celtes are recorded as being stationed together, though whether this was as in billets or in a camp on the left bank of the river is not made clear. Comments that the soldiers made their way into the palace from all sides, implies they were stationed around the urban and sub-urban area rather than within the palace itself. There is evidence for a building tentatively identified as a basilica on the Île de la Cité, which may have been turned over to military use, and there are plenty of buildings, both public and private, that survive in the Parvis de Notre Dame which could have been requisitioned if needed. However, such a composite picture is fundamentally weakened by attempting to graft insubstantial excavation onto problematic source material. We can support the veracity of Ammianus’ testimony by suggesting he had first-hand experience of Gaul and close contact with Julian and his military entourage, which would support the notion of accurate reportage. But there are so many problems relying on information mediated through an artfully constructed literary work written 30 years after the events it is describing. While

281 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XVII.2 (AD 357); XVII.8 (AD 358); XVIII.1 (AD 359); XX.1 (AD 360); XXVI.5 (360).
282 D. Busson, *Paris: Cartes Archeologique de la Gaule* (Paris, 1998), p. 68; P. Velay, *De Lutecé à Paris: l’île et les Deux Rives* (CNRS Paris, 2000), pp. 68 – 85. The main focus of settlement seems to have been concentrated on the main island on the Seine (l’Île de la Cité) but there is evidence for continued occupation amongst some of the main suburbs. The main evidence for abandonment is in the appearance of several cemeteries in previously occupied areas.
286 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XX.4.21: “Vagoque (ut in repentina solet excursu) occupavere volucriter regiam,” (rushing forth from different sides and in disorder (as is usual in such sudden tumult) quickly filled the palace).
288 See introduction, notes 79 – 84, for the debate on the reliability of Ammianus’ testimony.
there may be some genuine knowledge of Paris, it is doubtful that Ammianus’ account is any more than a collection of topoi relating to usurpations and their legitimation.

### 2.2. Military identity in the material record

The large amount of excavation work done on Roman military sites from the imperial period has allowed scholars to sketch the material background to how the army functioned in impressive detail, and this has laid the foundation for the reconstruction of military identities. The main areas of insight include issues like literacy (epigraphy and administration), diet and other consumption patterns (based on trade and local production), uniform and religion. Understanding the material culture of the Late Roman period is far less straightforward than the earlier periods, and so clear cut generalisations are less easy to make. One could accuse descriptions of the earlier imperial period as being a caricature of a more complex reality. The shorter time framework than usually given to the earlier period (3 centuries, compared with 1) is in itself a distorting factor. There were a multiplicity of military identities in the early imperial period both chronologically and culturally speaking, and variations from the norm are better seen as being part of an overreaching military identity rather than being presented as a challenge to the existing status quo. Given broader societal changes that are often seen as being hallmarks of the Late Roman period (changing administrative patterns, fiscal structures, economic patterns and cultural shifts etc.) it is no surprise that military identities may have expressed themselves in different material forms. This is certainly a much more satisfying form of argument than simplistic notions of decline which still afflict the study of the late Roman army.

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289 Many frontier studies are arguably (and understandably) proxy Roman army studies e.g. for Hadrian’s Wall see D. Breeze and B. Dobson, *Hadrian’s Wall* (London, 2000); for the Rhineland limes see D. Baatz, *Der Römische Limes. Archäologische Ausflüge Zwischen Rhein und Donau* (Berlin, 2000). For the use of the provincial material record to reconstruct military identities see the use of the material in Britain see D. Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession: Britain in the Roman Empire* (London, 2006), pp. 199 – 252.


291 See the discussion of the ‘Germanic’ units found at Hadrian’s Wall during the3rd century and the cemetery of Brougham, Cumbria with their distinct cultural signifiers in D. Mattingly *ibid.*, pp. 222 – 224.

Attempting to assess Late Roman military identities from the material evidence has been complicated by the major methodological debates within archaeology over the last few decades. Many archaeologists have become uneasy over essentialist readings of identity whereby one can expect a straightforward, uniform expression of a ‘military’ identity that is unchanging and consistent. The dynamic in these debates has been growing dissatisfaction with what were seen as excessively static understanding of how human societies functioned in the past in light of developments within the social sciences, especially anthropology, which have shown how humans are far more active in the creation of meaning within society than was previously assumed.293 There has also been particular scrutiny applied to questions of ethnicity in the material record in recent research, and attacks on the early 20th century ‘culture-history’ paradigm, which sought to explain coherence in the material record between different groups of artefacts as evidence for coherent groups of ‘peoples.’ Scholars have been quick to identify idiosyncratic burial rites in Gaul during the Roman period as representing intrusive ethnic groups from outside the imperial frontiers; who then wished to distinguish themselves from the provincial population. There are several examples in Gaul – most strikingly the ‘Hunnic’ skulls that appear in the cemeteries in St.-Martin-de-Fontenay in Normandy during the 5th century that have been linked to the groups of Alani testified in the written sources as being present in Gaul in the 5th century.294 Apart from the dubious political associations with mid-20th century totalitarianism, the ethnocentric ‘Germanist’ trend amongst scholars for interpreting burial evidence from the 4th century onwards has been rendered problematic by the enormous recent amount of scholarly work on ethnicity, which is now viewed as a constructed form of identity rather than a biological one.295 Functionalist approaches which argue that particular burial rites

295 For a discussion of the political agenda of the ‘Germani’ with 20th century German nationalism see H. Fehr, ‘Volkstum as Paradigm: Germanic People and Gallo-Romans in Early Medieval Archaeology since the 1930s,’ in A. Gillett, ed., op. cit., (2002), pp. 177 – 200. The issue of ethnicity has an extremely extensive and complex bibliography. Much of the recent scholarly interest in ‘ethnogenesis’ follows modern studies in sociology which sees ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ as a socially constructed identity rather than a biologically essentialist idea. The work of Richard Wenskus is of fundamental importance in this area: see R. Wenskus, Stammesbildung und Verfassung (Cologne and Graz, 1961). He argued for a traditionskern (kernel of tradition) amongst the migrating groups of the early medieval period provided by the leadership core, which then used this identity as a means of creating loyalty from its ethnically diverse following. This has been developed, amongst others, by his students of the ‘Vienna School’ such as Wolfram and Pohl e.g. H. Wolfram, ‘Einleitung oder Überlungen zur
mirror ethnic identity continue to be used extensively in scholarship, especially in Europe.

A strong line of argument has emerged to challenge the ‘ethnic’ interpretation that surrounds the transformations of burial evidence. Critics have pointed out that for late Roman northern Gaul there is no parallel in ‘Free Germany’ for the burial patterns that are identified as ‘Germanic’ within the Roman frontier. Burials within the Empire were generally inhumations, which of course paralleled the rites of the ‘Roman’ provincial population, rather than the cremation that was the favoured rite in barbaricum. Many artefacts that had earlier been seen as originating from ‘Free Germany,’ e.g. belt sets, are now recognised as having their origin – both in design and manufacture - from within the Empire – i.e. in Pannonia or Gaul.

The relationship between ethnicity and military identity is acute, given the tendency amongst many scholars to elide the two in the Late Roman period. Recent excavations at Angers have produced a series of graves with idiosyncratic rites that date to the end of the 4th century/early 5th century, which have been identified as ‘Goths’ serving in the comitatenses. The other factor relevant to northern Gaul is the emergence of weapons as grave goods from the 350s onwards found in cemeteries across Belgica, which have been

origo gentis’, in H. Wolfram and W. Pohl, eds. Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern: Berichte des Symposions der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung. 27. bis 30. Oktober, 1986, Stift Zwettl, Niederösterreich (Vienna, 1990) and W. Pohl, ‘Conceptions of Ethnicity in Early Medieval Studies’, in L. K. Little and B. H. Rosenwein, Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings (Oxford, 1998), pp. 13-24. For the west this idea has been most clearly expressed in P. Geary, Before France and Germany: the creation and transformation of the Merovingian world (New York, 1988). This approach has been criticised as failing to appreciate that the sources are not capable of passing on such a tradition, even if it existed, as they were texts created to suit contemporary agendas rather than preserving the past (cf. W. Goffart, The Narrators of barbarian history (A.D. 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon (Princeton, 1988)) which is the main argument put forward against the school by A. Gillett, ‘Ethnicity, History and Methodology,’ in A. Gillett, ed., op. cit., (2002), pp. 1 – 20. The approach has also been attacked for not being reductionist enough and clinging onto the foundation of a transcendent ethnic identity, which other scholars would argue is entirely situational see P. Amory, People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy 489 – 554 (Cambridge, 1997).


S. Jones, The Archaeology of Ethnicity: A Theoretical Perspective (London, 1997); this is also fundamental to the work of Guy Halsall in his various works such as his ‘Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier in Northern Gaul: the so called “Foederatengraber” Reconsidered’ in W. Pohl and H. Reimitz, Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter (Vienna 2000), pp. 167 – 180.


E. Swift, The End of the Western Roman Empire : on Archaeological Investigation (Stroud, 2000).

interpreted as evidence for ‘Germanic’ soldiers. Material culture is only one part of ethnicity, which is also constructed by use of other means such as language or political community. Indeed, even in the 1950s and 1960s, some archaeologists suggested that the weapons burials were a reassertion of the earlier 1st century practice of burial rather than a new development. There has been a gradual shift in scholarship as new archaeological theories have been assimilated. H. W. Böhme has refined his ideas since 1974 when he argued that the weapon burials in northern Gaul during the late Roman period represented foederati: he now holds the position that they represent ‘Germans’ from across the Rhine serving in the Late Roman Army. The latest close study of the Late Roman burial site at Lankhills in southern Britain has moved away from the interpretation of different burial rites as representing a particular intrusive ethnic group, as the supposed uniformity of the funerary practices has broken down under close scrutiny, and the isotope analysis showed the different geographical origins of individuals practising a similar rite. This clearly indicates the need for a complex understanding of identity in burial contexts, with particular need for specific context to be acknowledged.

The major issue is identifying artefacts that can incontrovertibly said to be ‘military’ as opposed to ‘civilian,’ and how appropriate these categories are during the period under examination. This could be seen as a disingenuous argument. Surely one can point to a fort

301 J. Werner, ‘Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation’, Archaeologica Geographica, 1 (1950), 23 – 32 argues that the weapons graves were associated with groups of laeti, a position elaborated on by H.W. Böhme, Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts Zwischen Unterer Elbe und Loire, 2 vols. (Munich, 1974), which argues that the graves represented foederati serving in the Roman army. These arguments were criticised by G. Halsall, ‘The Origins of the Reihengrabzivilisation’ in J.F. Drinkwater and H. Elton, ed., op. cit., (1992), 196 – 207, who argued that both approaches were mistaken and that the changes reflected social factors (i.e. fashion) rather than being connected with a particular historical group.


303 Böhme’s views have changed in since those put forward in H.W. Böhme op. cit (1974). H.W. Böhme, ‘The Vermand Treasure’, in K. Reynolds Brown, D. Kidd, and C. T. Little, eds., From Attila to Charlemagne: Arts of the Early Medieval Period in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 2000), pp. 78 – 89, argues that the graves were of regular soldiers who were Germanic in origin. Such shifts indicate how archaeological interpretations still rely heavily on contemporary historical frameworks.

or fabrica-issue helmet and with confidence pronounce them to be evidence for soldiers? However, such a functional analysis is too simplistic. For many of the finds discovered before the mid-20th century there is a poor level of knowledge about the context in which an artefact had been deposited, through an absence of records or poor quality excavation, so there is no reason to assume that we can simply derive a clear understanding of the context of deposition from the object itself. Roman military artefacts appear outside the Empire, which could as easily be argued to be products of trade rather than representing the movement of peoples into the Empire and back again. Weapons could be used by a different numbers of groups apart from soldiers: veterans, hunting aristocrats or individuals acting outside of imperial authority but attempting to use ‘official’ symbols of power as a means of expressing their claims to leadership. Identifying the difference between official and unofficial fortifications, ‘public’ and ‘private’, is difficult given the large variety of material remains at most sites. Therefore it is hard not to share the general sense of bewilderment reflected in many researchers’ attempts to highlight material evidence for soldiers in the 4th century given the differences in finds patterns from earlier centuries, and how the finds rarely reflect the neat categories given to those periods.

Two crucial aspects of the evidence pertaining to military identity are crossbow brooches and military belt sets. These have long been agreed to represent milites in the material record, but distinguishing between those who served in the army and the administration has been more difficult. Functionalist approaches are unhelpful given the wide variety of contexts these objects have been found in, though the over-representation in burial archaeology is probably as much a function of the preponderance of such material in the evidence. Ethnic attributions of this material is usually based on the artefacts female associated with accompanying burials, though some have argued that the belt-sets reflected borrowings from the Germanic world. These views have been comprehensively dismissed,

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and now the belt sets and brooches are seen as coming from a Roman milieu, probably from *fabricae* or other workshops fulfilling state contracts. Both elements show an interesting evolution through the 3rd into the 5th century. They appear across the empire, but are most commonly found in frontier provinces, though some have argued that they represent a takeover of civilian display by frontier culture. How far these narratives are valid cannot be studied in detail here due to a lack of space, but the approach this study takes will focus on context. Crossbow brooches and belt sets were only a small component of what could be used to represent an idealised military identity in death, and so other elements were required.

Therefore, a crucial question for the case studies is how *milites* can be identified in the material record in the areas under study, and what this tells us about the evolution of military identity and its distinctiveness in the landscape. The most effective way forward here will be to examine three main forms of evidence: fortifications, cities and the countryside using a whole range of material evidence (coins, weapons etc.) within their particular context: urban and rural structures as well as cemeteries. Epigraphy exists in variable quantities, but the question to be asked is how important is the military identity in the tombstones of soldiers, and what is the relationship between the other identities they articulate. Finally, a main challenge will be to investigate how far one can distinguish between ‘military’ and ‘civilian’ architecture in both urban contexts and fortifications by assessing typologies created for different sites.

### 2.2. Fortifications & frontiers

This topic is relatively well understood compared with many areas of Late Antique archaeology but late Roman phases of many forts are still complex to interpret. A major issue is attempting to define what precisely a ‘fort’ is during the Late Roman period. The problem of using Latin vocabulary (such as *castra* & *castella*) from contemporary sources is that their use is never technically specific. Most of the typologies modern scholars use

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309 See for example the puzzling amount of animal bones found at Late Roman levels at Binchester: D. Petts, ‘Military and Civilian: Reconfiguring the End of Roman Britain in the North’, *European Journal of Archaeology*, 16.2 (2013), 314 – 335.

have been created using a series of parameters: size, architectural form and relationship to a wider defensive structure that seem to relate to the evidence are all used but may not sufficiently compensate for the inherent biases of that evidence. Not enough is known about the interaction between frontier fortifications and those in the provincial interior as the chronology and typology are not necessarily the same. It should not be assumed that they are all the product of the military, as they could well have a civilian function.

Function is an important aspect of form, and an argument made about Late Roman forts was that they lost regularity of form and systematic structure, which are important characteristics of early imperial forts, reflects changes in internal military structure. A reason for changes in form could be that military families and civilians moved into forts and thus forts became increasingly difficult to distinguish from fortified sites in the interior of provinces. The changes could also be explained by the multiplication of units and increasing gradations of status. The question of where soldiers were stationed and whether units were based in a single fort or spread across several is a complex one which is difficult to answer in the absence of textual evidence. Another question is whether the forts

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311 R. Brulet ibid., pp. 156 – 157
312 The mistaken assumption leading to the attribution of the label “fort” to every potential walled site on a regular pattern has been observed for the Eastern frontier during the late Roman period where sites such as Tall Ar-Rum in northern Mesopotamia has now been shown to have been a civilian settlement after detailed investigation see M. Geschwind, ‘Every Square Structure a Roman fort? Recent Research in Qreiye-‘Ayyash and its Alleged Bridgehead Fort Tall Ar-Rum on the Euphrates’, in Á. Morillo, N. Hanel and E. Martin , ed., Limes XX. 20 Congreso Internacional de Estudios sobre la Frontera Romana Leon 2006, vol. 3 (Madrid, 2009), pp. 1593 – 1604.
314 The ‘chalet barracks’ argument is closely associated with forts on Hadrian’s Wall based on the identification of barracks with separate contubernia in smaller numbers (5 or 6) that differed from the standard High Empire model of 8, and appeared to be built in an irregular manner. This was suggested by C.M. Daniels, ‘Excavation at Wallsend and the Fourth century barracks on Hadrian’s Wall’, in W. S. Hanson and L. J. F. Keppie , ed., Roman Frontier Studies 1979 (Oxford, 1980), pp. 173 – 193. The characterization of “chalet barracks” has been subsequently challenged, largely by Bidwell, on the grounds that the barrack forms identified as being typical of the 4th century by Daniels are actually built in the early 3rd century and appear in several other forts: P.T. Bidwell, ‘Later Roman Barracks in Britain,’ in V. Maxfield and B. Dobson, eds., Roman Frontier Studies 1989: Proceedings of the XVth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies Exeter, 9-15 (Exeter, 1991), pp. 9 – 15; also the interpretations of irregular barracks used by several authors as reflecting changes in 4th century practice, are in fact often the result of failing to identify several sequences of remodelling of the same barrack, rather than one ‘irregular’ construction. This was reinforced by some barracks whose irregular pattern was as a result of a failure to excavate with a systematic stratigraphy, thus several stages had been interpreted as one; N. Hodgson and P.T. Bidwell, ‘Auxiliary Barracks in a New Light: Recent Discoveries on Hadrian’s Wall’, Britannia, 35 (2004), 121-157.
315 Understanding of occupation of forts and individual army units is largely based on Vindolanda tablet 154 which probably refers to the fort’s second occupation period which show that members of the Cohort of the
played a strictly defensive role, or whether they controlled the surrounding territory. Studies on the later Empire have often focused on soldiers’ use as riot control within cities. Fuhrmann argues that detached-service policing of civilian areas by milites is a common feature of the early imperial period. Small detachments from legions and auxiliary regiments were often despatched to civilian areas in policing posts. The spread of stationes (government administration posts), run by beneficiarii consulares, spread through the provinces too. For the late Roman period, Fuhrmann argues (using a reference in Ammianus) that the title stationarius had become an adjective for soldiers serving on the frontiers, whereas in the early Empire the meaning was for temporary guard or police duties by lower-ranking soldiers. Whether the forts were used as means of oppression or defence is a fundamental one to this study.

Regional trends are central to developments in Gaul during the Late Roman period. In Germania II, for example, it is difficult to establish the precise nature of military occupation during the 4th century, which may be related to the inundation of the Rhine delta in this period due to rising sea levels in the North Sea (the so-called Dunkirk II transgression). At the other end of the Rhine in Maxima Sequanorum the frontier is dotted with regularly refurbished guard towers and major forts, which while not conforming to a singular typology does appear to possess a strong formal structure into the 5th century. Valentinian’s refurbishment and construction programme is the most easily identifiable phase, but this should not be regarded as the end of the process. Therefore, the study of

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318 C. Fuhrmann, op. cit., p.209; Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, XVIII.5.3 describes soldiers guarding the eastern frontier as stationarii.
319 There is some doubt about the global scale of this change in sea levels, which used to be connected to any apparent water based catastrophe in the archaeological record, whereas these effects are now seen by researchers as being localized affairs. There is now little doubt that the northwest coast of Belgica II and Germania were seriously affected: see J. Bazelmans, M. Dijkstra and J. De Koning, ‘Holland during the First Millennium’, in M. Lodewijckx, ed., Bruc Ealles Well: Archaeological Essays Concerning the Peoples of North-West Europe in the First Millennium AD (Leuven, 2004), pp. 6 – 8; 15 – 18.
320 M. Reddé, ed., L’architecture de la Gaule romaine: les Fortifications Militaires (Bordeaux, 2006).
Belgica II will involve assessing how far specific local military communities can be identified across northern and south-western Gaul and whether they develop separate institutional identities during the 4th and 5th centuries.\(^{322}\) It is also essential to explore how the changing fiscal and economic context of the Late Empire and its structures affects the military culture of the case study areas, a factor that has been observed in much recent work in the Balkans.\(^{323}\)

2.3 Cities

The role of the city in Late Antiquity has been the focus of much research in recent years, benefitting from the relative wealth of data created by recent surveys and excavations. The main focus of researchers has been to challenge the traditional model of ‘decline’ used to

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\(^{322}\) R. Collins, ‘Hadrian’s Wall and the collapse of Roman frontiers’, in Á. Morillo, N. Hanel and E. Martin, eds., op. cit., (2009), pp. 181-197; Collins has emphasised that regional military identity in Roman Britain is apparent in the different material records that exist in the second half of the 4th century and the 5th century across the north and south of the British provinces. On Hadrian’s Wall, unlike the south coast of England, limitanei appear to have developed a separate institutional identity in the second half of the 4th century that allowed them to adapt and survive in the absence of economic and political attention from the Imperial centre. Unlike earlier scholars arguing that the end of the ‘Roman occupation’ on the wall represented a ‘military’ collapse, he argues that while there was a form of collapse in imperial authority, the military communities in the north actually experienced a form of continuity, adapting socially and economically to a new environment, a process that is witnessed by the increasing ‘informal’ use of the interior buildings of the forts themselves.

\(^{323}\) A.G. Poulter, ‘The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Danube: a City, a Fort and the Countryside’, in A.G. Poulter, ed., The Transition to Late Antiquity: on the Danube and Beyond (Oxford, 2007), pp. 51 – 97, discusses excavations at Dichin near Nicopolis ad-Istrum in Moesia have revealed a fort constructed in a rural context. It was marginal to the frontier and road network, but it was built next to a river adequate for transporting goods so it must have functioned within a communication network. The strong external wall structures of the fort are of a high quality in common with many contemporary fortifications. Therefore it seems inconceivable that the fort was not created by military engineers using state resources. However, the internal organisation of the buildings was quite different from that which was to be found in traditional forts. There were no administrative buildings and baths, though there was a barrack building, granaries and a church. The quality of building materials used in the internal structures implies the use of local resources, possibly because the occupants were unable to access regional supply networks. The finds of weapons (e.g. spears, plumbatae and shield bosses) implies a military occupation but the fort also contains numerous agricultural implements. The dating of the fort is different for most of the known sites in the Danube region, the coinage suggesting construction in about c. AD 400 and the first phase of occupation remained in use until its destruction in about AD 480. The excavator suggests that it was a fort constructed for a garrison of foederati. While this point is disputable and problematic, what is interesting is that the fort seems to have been operating for the purposes of supply rather than being a purely defensive structure. The location of the fort in agriculturally rich territory away from the main defended frontier implies that it was responsible for co-ordinating collection of annona, if not involved in farming itself (hence the agricultural implements). Before speculating on the issue of soldier-farmers the excavator points to the fort’s creation in the context of the disappearance of the villa economy in the region by the end of the 4th century, possibly as a result of the Gothic wars.
characterise developments in urban structure of the Late Empire.\textsuperscript{324} In general there are three particular characteristics of Late Antique urbanism: Christianisation, the administrative role of cities and fortification. The erection of walled circuits around many urban settlements, which were unenclosed during the Early Empire, is a well observed phenomenon. Many of these circuits enclosed only a fraction of the earlier occupied area.\textsuperscript{325} This arguably represented a fundamental change in urban organisation, moving away from the classical ‘open city’ model of urbanism to what can be described as a ‘closed city.’ This is often seen as a reflection of the wider changes associated with the Late Empire.\textsuperscript{326} This is also commonly used evidence to support “militarisation”. Defence had become a primary urban function, as cities were reduced to a series of strong-points organised by the Roman state to manage supply and taxation and protect key resources, primarily for the benefit of the military in terms of managing the \textit{annona} system but also providing accommodation for the \textit{comitatenses}.\textsuperscript{327}

Many scholars emphasise the importance of government intervention in this general phenomenon, the argument being that only the imperial government had sufficient resources. This also follows from the suggestion that given the argument that city resources

\textsuperscript{324} For a traditional view of urban decline during the late Empire see A.H.M. Jones, \textit{Later Roman Empire} (Oxford, 1964), pp. 712 – 766. For recent revisionist work emphasising continued vigour amongst urban communities see J. Rich, ed., \textit{The City in Late Antiquity} (London, 1992); N. Christie and S. Loseby, eds., \textit{Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages} (Aldershot, 1996); B. Ward-Perkins, ‘The Cities’, in A. Cameron and P. Garnsey, eds., \textit{The Cambridge Ancient History XIII, The Late Empire: AD 337 – 425} (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 371 – 410; L. Lavan, ed., \textit{Recent Research in Late Antiquite Urbanism Journal of Roman Archaeology Suppl. 42} (Providence R.I.,2001). For a neo-traditionalist view of urban decline see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, \textit{The Decline and Fall of the Roman City} (Oxford, 2001). It is orthodox to argue there was a significant transformation in urban settlement during Late Antiquity but there is however no consensus on what this was. The principal adjustment to scholarly discourse, in line with other areas, has been the recognition of variation between regions and within regions themselves.


\textsuperscript{326} In Roman Britain for example: “The domination of local administration by a substantial, town dwelling, Romanizing, local, land owning élite represented materially by well-constructed and well-maintained civic amenity buildings and large numbers of large town houses.” N. Faulkner, ‘Change and decline in late Roman-British towns’, in T.R. Slater, ed. \textit{Towns in Decline AD 100 – 1600} (Aldershot, 2001), p. 46.

\textsuperscript{327} Such comments have been expressed strongly for other parts of the Empire: “Is this not grounds for suspecting the intervention of central authority, creating a secure base in a scene of desolation for what one might term today ‘the essential fabric of government,’ that is officials, soldiers, stores and money?” J.Wilkes, ‘Civil Defence in Third-Century Achaia’, \textit{Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies}, 36 (1989), 187–192; for Gaul see: S. Johnson, \textit{Late Roman Fortifications} (London, 1983), p. 117.
were increasingly allocated to service the demands of the state in this period.\textsuperscript{328} In Gaul, written sources show the inhabitants of Autun requesting and obtaining support for rebuilding from the Tetrarchs.\textsuperscript{329} Ammianus comments that the walls of the city were crumbling with age in the 350s, which could be argued demonstrates how unaffordable the cost of maintaining them was for cities.\textsuperscript{330} Italy and neighbouring provinces have more direct evidence for state support with Ravenna, Rome, Albezega, Salona, Naples and Carthage all receiving state help with their fortifications.\textsuperscript{331} The demands of the Roman state could still make a significant impact on the internal structure of urban areas in the late 4\textsuperscript{th} and early 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries. Arles has evidence of significant amounts of housing being constructed in public spaces such as the forum and the circus at the end of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{332}

One important aspect is the incomplete nature of the evidence, often thanks to past excavation practice which saw later Roman levels being ignored. Scholars disagree on what a ‘late antique’ city should look like due to the complexity of evidence and lack of clear universal models, unlike those that exist for the Early Empire.\textsuperscript{333} City walls, often the principal surviving structures, are hard to understand due to incomplete knowledge of their extent and problems establishing coherent dating.\textsuperscript{334} The tendency to lump material together into a general framework, such as ‘insecurity’ or ‘defence,’ do not reflect the complexity of the technical issues. Aquileia, a site of major importance for Late Antique urbanism, on account of its accessibility for archaeological investigation, given its

\textsuperscript{329} Autun was damaged by the 7 month siege of 270 by Victorinus, the ‘Gallic’ Emperor, against whom the Aedui had revolted in 269 so was given special treatment by the Tetrarch Constantius. J. Drinkwater, The Gallic Empire: separatism and continuity in the North-Western provinces of the Roman Empire, A.D.260-274 (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 37 – 38.
\textsuperscript{330} Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, XVI.2.1, ‘Comperit Augustudini civitas antiquae muros spatosi quidem ambitus sed carie vestutatis invalidos.’ As always with Ammianus, it is difficult to know how far this reflects reality, given that he could have seen the walls himself or had contact with others who had, or it could suggest both Constantius had not adequately repaired them in the 290s. They are still standing today.
\textsuperscript{331} Analogies can be made for Gaul from 5\textsuperscript{th} century Illyria: Salona’s fortification walls seem to have been rebuilt with the direct involvement of the Magister Militum Sigisvult see N. Christie and A. Rushworth, ‘Urban fortification and defensive strategy in fifth and sixth Italy: the case of Terracina’, Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1 (1988), 73 – 87.
\textsuperscript{333} A. Cameron, ‘Ideologies and Agendas in Late Antique Studies’, in L. Lavan and W. Bowden, Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology (Leiden, 2003), pp. 10 – 11.
abandonment during the Early Medieval period and a lack of subsequent development, presents major difficulties when assessing the circuit sequences.\textsuperscript{335}

During the Early Empire walls in the Western provinces were a statement of a city’s status and part of the civic architectural elaboration championed by local pride and euergetism, in the same category as theatres, baths and aqueducts.\textsuperscript{336} Only a few cities possessed them and they were a symbol of colonial status or imperial patronage. Autun’s impressive walls were erected at the city’s foundation with the support of Augustus himself and signified the city’s importance in the \textit{novo ordo}.\textsuperscript{337} The city walls of the Late Empire have a different architectural style. Not only were they shorter, but they were often built on strong foundations of \textit{spolia} taken from public buildings and tombstones, strengthened with towers and gates.\textsuperscript{338} Entrance to cities was more easily controlled and the projecting towers added to many circuits are often interpreted as being for the deployment of artillery.\textsuperscript{339} This can be paralleled in other parts of the Empire. In the Balkans, Late Antique cities have been described as fortified outposts of the state largely excluding civilian urban populations.\textsuperscript{340} In Italy, the Late Roman period is being seen as one where the urban landscape was being shaped by the needs of defence: urban communities felt safer behind city walls.\textsuperscript{341}

One can argue, however, that late Roman walls also represented a continued form of urban monumentality and symbolism.\textsuperscript{342} Aurelian’s walls at Rome were probably an inspiration to many other cities, and while the context of the construction was to do with threats to Italy,
the extent of the walls are too impressive to be merely serving military needs. Not all wall circuits were tiny enceintes – some sites remained quite extensive. Some central-western Gallic walls have a range of similar geometric polychrome patterns on their external facing wall, most famously at Le Mans, with a common dating of construction to the last quarter of the 3rd century. These visually striking walls are chronologically consistent with Aurelian’s activities at Rome and the propaganda of his successor Probus as the “restorer of the cities of Gaul” in the 270s and 280s. It would make sense to see the enormous logistical endeavour involved in this regional development to be part of an official building programme, possibly aimed at securing the loyalty of those cities whom until recently had been loyal supporters of the rival Gallic Empire, or the result of locals being keen to state their loyalty to the new political order. Whether this was funded by the Imperial fisc or an act of the local curial class using their own resources is unclear, but local pride must have played some role in the commissioning of this work. At the end of the next century Ausonius was keen to comment on the monumental effect of Bordeaux’s city walls, as well as its port, in his Catalogue of Famous Cities: he only mentions one monument from within the city.

The precise relationship between city walls and settlement patterns are not fully clear, for there is evidence for continued extra-mural settlement, not least related to the construction of suburban churches associated with particular saints. However, it is likely that, given the large scale investment and manpower needed to create these structures, and their increasingly common occurrence, in some ways city walls became, along with churches, a powerful symbol of Late Antique city status as opposed to being the preserve of a few, favoured cities as was the case during the early Empire.

Another important factor for cities was their role as administrative centres and they were probably important for military logistics. State arms factories (fabricae) appear in several

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343 A good example are the walls at Le Mans: see J. Guilleux, L’enceinte romaine du Mans (Le Mans, 2000).
344 This reputation was praised by Julian, for whom it made a suitable comparison for his own record in Gaul: Julian Convivium 314b; Julian Misopogon 340D.
346 Ausonius, Ordo Urbium Nobilium, 128 – 168.
cities throughout the Empire.\textsuperscript{349} The reason for their location is not clear, but it was probably due to factors such as existing transport networks, local traditions of metallurgy and cities that had the infrastructure to cope with providing manpower and accommodation. The other structures associated with the Late Roman period urban space are granaries (\textit{horrea}). These appear at many locations across Gaul and throughout the Empire. It is these issues, and the fact that cities are seen as the main base for army units, that has led to the characterisation of cities as part of a militarised landscape.\textsuperscript{350}

Therefore the key must be to establish what extent city walls can be identified as part of a long-term process of change during the period we call “Late Roman” or as a specific response to a particular military decision at the end of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century. All of this implies that urban fortifications were part of a deeper pattern of urban transformation rather than a simple response to the problems of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century. As is clear from other parts of the Empire, such as the Danube, the 5\textsuperscript{th} century also saw specific developments in urban sites when the imperial government established various military-ecclesiastical centres that marked a distinct rupture between previous phases of civilian occupation.\textsuperscript{351} It remains to be seen how far this applies to the cities of Belgica II.

In this section therefore, the central questions are: how did the city walls and fortified circuits emerge in the case study areas, and what relationship existed between them and the Roman military?

\section*{2.4. The countryside}

Rural organisation is a key aspect of understanding how the military system functioned. The redistribution of rural surpluses through the fiscal system was fundamental to how soldiers were supplied and organised.\textsuperscript{352} The current evidence is certainly sympathetic to arguments

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{351} A. G. Poulter, \textit{Nicopolis ad Istrum a Roman, Late Roman and Early Byzantine City} (London, 1995).
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\end{footnotesize}
for significant rural change in Late Roman Gaul.\textsuperscript{353} The traditional view of the countryside was that there was a large-scale abandonment of rural sites (villas in particular) during the ‘3rd Century Crisis’ as a result of the violent barbarian invasions (particularly 275-6).\textsuperscript{354} Percival argued that invasions were an insufficient explanation and that observable changes in villa use were the result of long-standing economic and social changes which could be dated back to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century.\textsuperscript{355} Wightman developed these points, accepting that the evidence for violent destruction that could be associated with the invasions of the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} century was at best ambiguous, and that several sites were already being abandoned at the start of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, suggesting long-term issues better explained the apparent collapse of the early imperial landscape in \textit{Belgica}. She also argued that there was a concentration of estates in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century and this lead to the nucleation of settlements alongside lines of communication or security such as roads, waterways and hill forts in the face of increasing insecurity during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century, in a way that laid the foundations for the ‘feudal’ pattern of land-holding in the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{356} It has been argued that the only type of building activity that flourished in the Late Roman countryside were fortifications in the form of \textit{burgi}, circuit walls and other buildings that were traditionally identified as military sites, and this has been used to support the view already discussed in other contexts that the late Roman countryside was ‘militarised.’\textsuperscript{357} Wightman attributed the changes she identified as being driven by endemic insecurity and the changes in rural settlement partially caused by the settlement of new migrant communities in the countryside.\textsuperscript{358} The ‘militarisation’ thesis would therefore argue that that the military bureaucracy was more directly involved in rural production than it was in the early imperial period as it needed to consolidate and maintain its supply lines against a backdrop of rural depopulation and economic decline.

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\textsuperscript{354} The traditional view can be found in R. Agache, \textit{La Somme pre-Romaine et Romaine d’ap\`{e}res les Prospec\mbox{tions Aeriennes a Basse Altitude} (Amiens, 1978). Agache’s argument was based on extensive aerial photography, which also argued that any villas that were refurbished or rebuilt during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century were transformed into villages. The essence of his case was that there was a severe discontinuity between the mode of production in the Roman and Medieval periods and that the origins of this was to be found in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century.
\textsuperscript{358} The ‘peasant-soldier’ thesis of the \textit{limitanei} is strongly referenced here by Wightman in E.M.Wightman, \textit{op. cit.}, (1985) p. 249.
\end{flushright}
One reason for changing ideas and approaches to the rural landscape is the methodological developments in archaeology over the last decades. The increasing use of land survey has provided a much higher quantity of data that can be used to test generalised statements based on unreliable indicators such as cemeteries. Another issue in understanding rural settlement patterns in the 4th and 5th centuries was the complexity involved in identifying and understanding the stratigraphic layers of later periods without the same quality of chronological indicators (coins, pottery etc.) that are common for earlier periods of Roman archaeology. Enterprising studies have also identified aspects of recycling and reuse of materials from rural sites as indicating persistent use of sites. The references to villas in the works of Late Roman authors do not have to be rejected out of hand on the grounds that their references to such sites are literary invention. The detailed descriptions in Sidonius, while undoubtedly influenced by accounts found in Pliny, have many parallels with existing structures in northwest Europe. The question therefore remains how these new ideas affects understanding of the role the army played in the landscape of Belgica II.

Research since the 1980s has seen a more systematic attempt to understand the late antique countryside beyond using it as a catch all term for everything outside of the city walls, and paralleled (albeit delayed) the increased interest in urban archaeology. This has led to a recent historiographical push for re-evaluation of the countryside during the late Roman period and attempts at being more positive than previous characterisations. Recent work has challenged many of the details of the traditional picture arguing that it is too

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360 This was due to a combination of disinterest by early excavators who looked past late Roman and post-Roman layers to access classical sites, but also thanks to a lack of secure dating material e.g. using the styles of mosaics. There has been radical re-dating of some villa sites by placing more emphasis on pottery rather than coinage, for example Montmaurin in the south of Gaul is now seen as dating to the 5th or even the 6th centuries; see L. Stirling, The Learned Collector: Mythological Statuettes and Classical Taste in Late Antique Gaul (Michigan, 2005), p. 64.

361 For the western provinces (though the focus is mainly on Italy and Southern Gaul) see B. Munro, ‘Recycling, Demand for Materials and Landownership at Villas in Italy and the Western Provinces in Late Antiquity’, Journal of Roman Archaeology, 25 (2012), 351 – 370.


derivative on models created by simplistic readings of literary texts. Many villas were being restored, extended and refurbished although some lost the architectural complexity of the earlier period and continued to function on a simpler level. The increasing ability to identify the persistence of élite settlement and continuity of site into the 5th century use has allowed challenges to older ideas of rural depopulation and abandonment as can be seen in ripostes to evidence of post-4th century settlement being dismissed as the work of ‘squatters’. As has been discussed already in the context of urban change, researchers now increasingly emphasise the importance of regional variations in qualifying generalised statements of settlement change.

This overall approach is important, as a better understood landscape permits a more accurate assessment of the economic function it played in the late Roman period and to what extent its production was essential to the provisioning of the military establishment. The systems of supply and transport of goods to army units entailed an enormous amount of administrative effort. Was the northern Gallic countryside still used to satisfy the enormous demands of the Roman state? The traditional view of rural decline in the 4th century would argue that it was not. The disappearance of villas and their replacement by primarily wooden structures suggest that there was a move away from a cash crop driven production system to subsistence. The existence of long-distance trade and how the army integrated the local economy into the imperial economy is one topic requiring further investigation, alongside the micro-economic impact of individual forts and military communities. This implies the maintenance of a ‘villa economy’ supply system similar to


that which operated in the early Empire, as opposed to the direct central involvement in the
production of supplies, which is suggested by the Dichin in the Balkans, as discussed
above. Evidence for a continuation of any form of villa scale production would imply a
continued production of surpluses, while reduced occupation or simpler forms of land use
could imply the adoption of subsistence forms of production which are less likely to have
made much impact. Parallel to this is the need to find any evidence for direct
governmental involvement in rural production, like the famous ‘Langmauerbezirk’ in the
Trier region of Belgica I, which has traditionally been identified as an imperial estate.

Another approach is to examine the extent to which the countryside became dominated by
issues of security and the extent it became more ‘fortified’ as a result. An important feature
of the Late Roman countryside is the occupation of large numbers of Hohensiedlungen from
the 3rd century onwards. These are mostly found in Belgica I, though the growth of high
level, secure settlement is to be found outside of northern Gaul too, which could indicate it
was part of a wider trend in imperial society than one specific to the northern Gallic
provinces and were specifically related to the political and economic circumstances of the
Late Empire. What lies at the heart of our concerns is the question of how far they represent
private as opposed to public initiatives? Did the military have any role in these structures,

(Luxembourg, 1985), pp. 6 – 21.
371 The English term ‘hillforts’ is inadequate due to the variety of settlement types that the German word
encompasses, and the word itself is often criticised by prehistorians see for example M. O’Kelly and C. O’Kelly,
*Early Ireland: an Introduction to Irish Prehistory* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 310. It should be pointed out that some
of these sites had been used during the Iron Age too see K.-J. Gilles, *Spatromische Hohensiedlungen in Eifel und
Hunsruck* (Trier, 1985).
372 In the south of Gaul the famous documented example is the ‘Theopolis’ site constructed by the former
Praetorian Prefect Fl. Dardanus with his wife and brother in the second decade of the 5th century. The site
provided strong walls for defence as well as, one can infer from the name, a religious function. *CIL* XII 1524 =
*ILS* 1279 = *AE* 1959, 58
Claudius Postumus Dardanus v(ir) inl(ustris) et pa/triciae dignitatis, ex consulari pro/vinciae Vienensis, ex
magistro scri/nii lib(ellorum), ex quaest(ore), e x praef(ecto), pr(aet/oro) Gall(orum), et / Nevia Galla, cl(arissima) et
inl(ustris) fem(ina), mater fam(iliae) / eius, lococ ui nomen Theopolis est / viarum usu m, caesium et utrumque
on/tium laterib(us), praestiterunt, muros/ et portas dederunt; quod in agro/ proprio constitutum tueti/onem
omnium voluerunt esse commune, adni/tente etian(!) vir(o) inl(ustris) com(it)e ac fratre me/morati viri
Claudius Postumus Dardanus, a noble man of patrician rank, formerly consul of the province of Vienne, head of
the petitions department, quaestor and praetorian prefect of the Gauls, and Nevia Gallia, a distinguished and
and how far do their occupation patterns change over time? Another related aspect of the ‘militarisation’ of rural contexts is the appearance of ‘fortified villas’ which could strongly suggest the assumption of defensive duties by civilians or the direct involvement by the military or official administration to secure military needs. In Gaul there are several villas which seem to have defensive structures added to them; are reported to have been occupied by soldiers or have been located near a fortified site. These appear in several written texts for the 5th century mainly for southern Gaul.\(^{373}\) Van Ossel identifies several types of sites that make up the “fortified villa” typology.\(^{374}\) Again there are regional parallels which could make this a more general phenomenon relating to changes across the whole of imperial society than being simply directly related to *Belgica II*.\(^{375}\) Ward-Perkins stresses noble woman, his materfamilias, appointed themselves keepers of the place called Theopolis and, after approaches had been carved out on both sides of the mountains, gave it walls and gates. They wanted the land that is established as being in their ownership to be shared for the safety of all. Claudius Lepidus, a noble man, comrade and brother of the above-mentioned man, former consul of Upper Germany, *magister memoriae* and count of the *res privata*, also lent his support so that a notice could be displayed of their concern for the safety of everyone and of their devotion to the community. This initiative is instructive as it implies an increasing provision of defence by private individuals not controlled by the state. On the other hand, one could argue that Dardanus’ *Theopolis* was not simply a ‘private’ initiative and the product of a political vacuum caused by the disappearance of Imperial power. The language of the famous inscription he erected he is resonant of the language contained in a parallel text for the Eastern Empire issued by Theodosius II in 420 permitting landowners to fortify their estates in the context of increased tension with Persia. CJ 8.10.10 The phrase ‘*erga omnium salutem eorum studium et devotionis publicae titulus*’ (a notice could be displayed of their concern for the safety of everyone and of their devotion to the community) implies that Dardanus felt he had to justify the fortification of his estate, implying such actions were not seen as being legitimate unless following official procedure. The political climate in the first few decades of the 5th century was traumatic for southern Gaul, so while his action hints at the weakness of the Roman state it was not necessarily absent.\(^{373}\) Sidonius Apollinaris is the source for several sites: his own Avitacum (*Ep.II.2*); Ameonissimus of Consentius nr. Narbonne (*Ep. VIII.4*); the *Burgus* of Pontius Leontius (*Carmina* XXII); Venantius Fortunatus describes the villa occupied by Nicetius, Bishop of Trier (*Carmina* III.12).\(^{374}\) P. Van Ossel, *Etablissements Ruraux de l’Antiquite Tardive dans le Nord de la Gaule* (Paris, 1992), pp. 163 – 168: these are a) ‘hill forts’ rural fortifications constructed on a high point b) towers, sometimes enclosed by a ditch, constructed next to or inside rural settlements c) *burgi* (fortified structures) constructed next to or within rural settlements d) Defensive ditches encircling certain villas e) villas with fortifications f) ‘military’ or ‘Germanic’ objects found at villa sites.\(^{375}\) In Africa, the fortified *qusr* type of farmstead was the dominant type between AD 300 – AD 700, and synonymous with growing pressure from nomadic groups. D. Mattingly and J. W. Hayes, ‘Nador and Fortified Farms in North Africa’, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 5 (1992), 408 – 418; D. Mattingly and B. Hitchener ‘Roman Africa: an archaeological review’, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 85 (1995), pp. 195 – 6; D. Mattingly, *Tripolitania* (London, 1995), pp. 147 – 8; 194 – 209. Mattingly has particularly argued against any simplistic attribution of ‘military’ or ‘para-military’ function to these sites in view of epigraphic evidence (Nador has an inscription identifying its proprietor as a civilian) and the different regions where these fortified farm structures have been found. He certainly argues against any interpretation which represents these as new ‘military’ settlers as a colonial hangover. They represent, in his view, a combination of possibilities: elites tightening control over labour, increasing concerns about security or possibly reinforced storage facilities. Types of ‘fortified villa’ are also very commonly identified in the Danube region too during the late 3rd and 4th centuries, where a variety of different types exist ranging from the strongly fortified ‘palace’ type structures at Split and Gamzigrad, as well as many others with thinner walls but possessing defensive towers. L. Mulvin,
regional variation in both style and intensity of fortification, and notes that despite the prominence in the historiography, given the political insecurity of the period it is surprising how little fortification there actually is, certainly when compared to the medieval period.\(^{376}\)

Beyond the question of site typology is the issue of the various artefacts, including such objects as weapons, belts, brooches etc. at villa sites which have been identified as ‘military’ or ‘Germanic’: terms often interchangeable in the literature.\(^{377}\) Of course, just because an occasional artefact is found on a site does not mean that there is conclusive evidence for a military presence – they may well be circulating due to commerce or another unrelated reason. The other problem in this debate is the complicated issue of ethnic attribution and the inherent problems in identifying items as ‘Germanic’ as opposed to ‘Roman.’ The wider issue of ‘militarisation’ bears heavily on this issue as it is unclear whether one should understand these artefacts signal a general increase in military values held by the general population or a specific military role in the running of the establishment, relating to the assumption that the “Roman Army” in the Late Roman period was primarily formed of mercenaries from across the Rhine frontier. Villas changed their form, with occupation becoming more ‘simple’: wood and spolia replaced newly quarried stone as the primary building materials, while baths and under-floor heating were replaced by artisan activities, such as metal-working, as the main function for buildings.\(^{378}\)

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the later Roman period increasingly resembled what have been described by scholars as ‘Germanic’ forms of settlement – such as sunken houses or Grübenhauser. Whittaker, following Van Ossel and others, argued that this is explained by a cultural change, and the increasing importance of military values amongst the elites. These replaced a ‘civilian’ emphasis on lavish decoration and monumental architectural display and were symptomatic of this ‘militarisation.’

The final area of investigation is the wider economic relationship between the military system and the land. The question that remains to be asked is how far the archaeological database in the areas covered by the case studies fit in with the two models listed above, and how far military issues can explain the changes in rural land use across the period under examination?

Chapter 3: Belgica II Case Study

The existence of two large military zones in Belgica II during the late Roman period, supplemented by fortified wall circuits around the main urban centres, the large-scale abandonment of large scale rural settlements and an increasing number of weapons burials all appear to testify to the relative increasing importance of military aspects of the province’s culture. Thus it could be argued that the military became fully integrated into provincial structures, which were directly controlled by the military authorities to supply their men, thus creating a ‘militarised’ landscape in which civilians and milites were in reality indistinguishable. This is an overstatement of a more complex reality which varied from micro-region to micro-region. It is certainly true that military identities changed during the 4th and 5th centuries, which was inevitable given the social and economic shifts that Gaul underwent, but this does not mean they necessarily became completely integrated into the province, or lost any formality before the 5th century. The literary evidence is limited and difficult to interpret, so it should be analysed fully before we examine what perspectives the archaeology gives us.

Section 1: Military structures and identity in Belgica II during the late Empire

3.1.1 Institutional identity: Dux Belgicae Secundae

Evidence for a formal military structure in Belgica II is the appointment of a senior military officer with specific responsibility for Belgica II which is attested in the Notitia Dignitatum (Dux Belgicae Secundae). This would seem to be prima facie evidence for a more prominent military role in the province during the 4th and 5th centuries. The office of the ducatus was probably a development from the Tetrarchic period, though it originated earlier. The Notitia is the only direct testimony for the ducatus and thus the only positive

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381 ND Occ.V.140; ND Occ. XXXVIII; the latter chapter gives a full list of the castella, milites and officium attached to the position, which seems quite limited compared with commands of other duces.
382 Like so many Roman military terms, as discussed in chapter 2, the origin of the word has very general, non-technical origins. The position of dux originally appears in Republican period with a very general meaning of a leader in some form of military action. From the 2nd century AD it denoted a temporary command in particular circumstances such as a centurion commanding a legion (e.g. CIL III.4885), but seems to have become formally used as a title for military commanders from the mid-3rd Century onwards, with a dux ripae appearing at Dura-Europus; see F. Millar, The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337 (Cambridge, 1993), p. 133.
evidence for its existence in the late 4th century or early 5th century. However, it is probably a position showing the continual evolution of the Roman military structure in Gaul rather than a creation de novo.\(^{383}\) The Notitia alludes to the origins of the office under the heading ‘Dux Tractus Armoricani’:

*Extenditur tamen tractus Armoricani et Nervicani limitis per provincias quinque Aquitanica prima et secunda, Lugdunensis secunda et tertia.*\(^{384}\)

However, the district of the Armorican and Nervican frontier is extended to include the Five Provinces: First and Second Aquitaine; Second and Third Lugdunensis.

The text has some obvious anomalies, the most striking being that these provinces have no geographical relevance to the *civitas* of the Nervii despite appearing in the title. Of the five provinces referred to only four are mentioned by name. This discrepancy is resolved if the *ducatus Belgicae Secundae* was a later subdivision of the *tractus Armoricani et Nervicani*, which originally covered the whole north-western coast of Gaul down to Aquitaine: after this division, Armorica became a separate responsibility from that of the Nervian coast, and *Belgica II* would be the missing 5th province. When this division took place is difficult to answer.\(^{385}\) There is a case that the *ducatus* was a descendant of the original command of the *praefectus Classis Britannicae*, to which direct textual references disappear after c. 250.\(^{386}\)

Many scholars assume the office still existed in some form after this date because of the multiple textual references to fleets operating in the English Channel.\(^{387}\) This cannot be

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\(^{384}\) *ND. Occ.* XXXVII.24 - 29; the title *Dux Tractus Armoricani et Nervicani* is also used in the same section *ND. Occ.* XXXVII.13

\(^{385}\) The reorganisation could date to Valentinian given the problems that he faced in Britain in 367, but it seems more likely, given the confusion in the *Notitia*, and the compilation of the document to some point after 395, that the reorganisation was in the context of the usurpations of Magnus Maximus (383 - 388), Eugenius (392 – 394) or Constantine III (407 – 411).

\(^{386}\) This is from an inscription at Arles *CIL* XII.686 which the latest known epigraphic evidence for the *Classis Britannicae*.

\(^{387}\) There is evidence that the usurper Carausius had responsibility for northwest Gaul in the 280s, and from this it can be inferred that Carausius’s command was part of an evolution in the command of the *Classis Britannica* to one that involved the command of soldiers as well as the fleet. See Eutropius, *Breviarum*, 9.21: “Cum apud Bononiam per tractum Belgicae at Armoricae pacandum mare accepisset, quod Franci et Saxones infestabant.” (He had received orders at Boulogne to clear the sea along the coast of Belgica and Armorica which Franks and Saxons were infesting.) The evolutionary argument is outlined by J. Mann, ‘The Historical Development of the Saxon Shore’ in V. Maxfield, ed., *The Saxon Shore: a Handbook* (Exeter, 1989), pp. 6 – 8 which follow the arguments in S. Johnson, *The Forts of the Saxon Shore* (London, 1976). This suggested that the forts on both sides of the channel came under a unified command during the 4th century, the main evidence being Ammianus’ reference to a *comes maritimum tractus*, Nectidarius, who was killed in 367 during the so-called “Barbarian Conspiracy” (Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, XXVII.8.1- 10). Scepticism has been
proven, but what the fragmentary evidence appears to suggest is a long-term evolution of military commands in an area controlling a zone that had been strategically important since the early Empire, and which, as a result, saw a regular stationing of soldiers. This indicates that a constantly evolving military structure, with attendant hierarchy, was in place on the *Belgica* coast from the whole period under examination until the 5th century.

The creation of *duces* is often taken to represent late Roman separation of military and civilian powers: a *praeses* continued to exercise the non-military responsibilities in their province. 388 The *Codex Theodosianus* lists the responsibilities of the *ducatus* as defence of the frontier region; ensuring the fortifications were in good repair, managing recruitment and assignation of men to their units; responsibility for discipline and being responsible for the collection and distribution of supplies from the provincial administration. 389 This role required a significant administrative capacity. Some have noted a relative lack of bureaucracy in the late Roman Army compared with earlier periods apparent from the disappearance of *principia* in many late Roman forts. From this it has been concluded that military administration became more “centralised.” 390 This is inferred from the evidence of the *Notitia* with the list of clerical staff being restricted to senior officials. However such a view has no positive evidence and has probably been influenced by the old idea of ‘barbarisation’. 391 As we have established, unit sizes were smaller in the late Empire, so

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389 Managing frontier regions see (C.Th. 7.1.9); recruitment (C.Th. 7.22.5); discipline (C.Th. 2.1.2); supplies (C.Th. 11.5)
391 Again this belief comes from ideas of a ‘Germanised’ army in the 4th century that was predominantly illiterate, are originally inferences from the archaising text in Vegetius, *Epitome*, II.19 discusses the traditional legion’s need of men trained in short-hand to manage the numerous administrative tasks necessary for the smooth functioning of the military system. This description was part of a wider rhetorical and political agenda to argue for military reform based on ancient practice, so the implication is that such practices were no longer
there is a case for arguing that specialist administrative staff would have become a pooled resource. The testimony of the Abinnaeus archive from Egypt shows the *Dux Aegyptus* in his administrative role carrying out many of the tasks outlined above. The *ducatus* would logically act as a co-ordinator of the forts on the coast of *Belgica* II for the main business of supply and pay, and other military management issues. Even a small unit would necessarily produce a degree of administration, though the internal structures are not sufficiently understood to permit confirmation of this. The fortuitous discovery of military archives from other periods and places have perhaps subconsciously disfavoured the late Roman West, but there is no direct evidence that while imperial administration functioned, this did not also find an expression on a local level. Parallels from other parts of the Empire can be found for the 4th century. The *Notitia*’s list of ducal staff appears quite common, but as ever with Vegetius, precise references to late Roman military practice is absent, N. Milner, *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science* (Liverpool, 1993), p. xxviii.

392 See discussion on unit sizes in chapter 1.

393 He appears confirming appointments; resolving disputes over the aforementioned appointments; assigning soldiers for other duties (collection of taxes etc.); acting as a court of appeal to deal with complaints about officers; regulating the *annona* and disciplining soldiers. See H.I. Bell, ed., *The Abinnaeus Archive: Papers of a Roman Officer in the Reign of Constantine II* (Oxford, 1962) for examples: managing appointments (no. 1 and 2); collection of taxes (no. 3); court of appeal against soldiers (no. 18; 44 – 57); management of *annona* (no. 26); disciplining soldiers (no. 15).

394 See the next section on forts for fuller discussion of the material context. For unit administration the best examples are for earlier periods are the auxiliary cohort at Vindolanda in the late 1st century; A. Bowman and D. Thomas, *Vindolanda: the Latin Writing Tablets* (Newcastle, 1974), and the mid-3rd century archive at Dura-Europus; D. Kennedy, ‘The Cohors XX Palmyrenorum at Dura Europos’ in E. Dabrowa, ed., *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East* (Krakow, 1994), pp. 89-98. The military *ostraca* at Bu Njem in Tunisia from the mid-3rd century provide close parallels in terminology and administrative procedures to those in Vindolanda which shows a degree of standardisation despite the differences in time and space: A. Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier: Vindolanda and its People* (London, 1994), p. 35; R. Marichal, *Les Ostraca de Bu Njem Suppléments de Libya Antiqua* (Tripoli, 1992).

395 The Abinnaeus archive is the best known example used to illustrate 4th century military practice, see H. Bell, *op. cit.*, (1962), made up of correspondence that Abinnaeus received from a variety of military officials and civilians, alongside petitions and contracts. There are mentions of the continued use of bureaucratic means for the accounting of supplies (e.g. no. 4). The question of how far this is carried out in Gaul is impossible to prove at the moment, but there is no positive reason not to believe that soldiers in Gaul weren’t behaving in similar ways. Another parallel is found in St. Augustine’s correspondence with Publicola (*Ep.* 46) which records the importance of written instructions providing legitimate entry into provincial boundaries of nomadic tribesmen, the paperwork being approved by a decurion or a tribune, which in this case implies military officers. This has been disputed, and it has been suggested that the *decuriones* and *tribuni* were actually local ‘dynasts’ J. Matthews, ‘Mauretania in Ammianus and the Notitia’, in J.C. Mann, R. Goodburn and P. Bartholomew, eds., *op. cit.* (1976), p. 171, but I would argue that this is transposing a situation more appropriate to a later period. The situation in Africa, it goes without saying, is different from Gaul, but given the earlier evidence discussed in note 15, I am inclined to believe that some form of standard practice was still being carried out at the end of the 4th century in most parts of the Empire, as can be seen in Augustine *Ep.* 43.1: *"In Arzugibus, ut audivi, decuriones qui limiti praest vel tribuno solent iurare barbari, iurantes per daemones suos, qui ad deductas bastagas pacti fuerint, vel aliquis ad servandas fruges ipsas, singuli possessoribus ve*
substantial, though it is difficult to give an accurate assessment given that only senior positions are mentioned, but even this brief list implies the command produced significant paperwork. Although it could be argued that this was merely ceremonial, this does imply that the military structure in Belgica II wielded considerable administrative capacity, and this would have maintained a strong institutional ethos and perpetuated a military identity— as those responsible to the ducatus.

The Dux Belgicae II was one of the smallest military commands that exist in the Notita (see table 1 below).

Table 1: military units/castella listed under the command of various duces in the Notitia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Military Units (Infantry/Cavalry)</th>
<th>Castella</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dux Belgicae II</td>
<td>1/1 &amp; 1 fleet</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dux Tractus Armoricani</td>
<td>10/0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dux provincia Sequanici</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dux Mogontiacensis</td>
<td>11/0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dux Britanniarum</td>
<td>27/9</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dux Raetiae</td>
<td>16/6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This might be because the Dux also had had previous responsibility for the fortifications in the hinterland of Belgica II—the so-called “Limes Belgicus,” and most of these seem to have

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ND. Occ., XXXVIII ‘10 Officium autem habet idem vir spectabilis dux hoc modo: 11 Principem ex eodem corpore; 12 Numerarium; 13 Commentariensem; 14 Adiutorem; 15 Subadiuvam; 16 Regrendarium; 17 Exceptores; 18 Singulares et reliquis officiales.’

ND. Occ., XL.33 – 56.
been abandoned by the end of the 4th century.\textsuperscript{399} The problem with this theory is that the existence of the "\textit{Limes Belgicus}" is now discredited as being a product of 19th century nationalist ideas.\textsuperscript{400} There is certainly no mention of it in the \textit{Notitia}, and the occupation of the forts was not permanent during the 4th century.\textsuperscript{401} It would make sense, given the need to ensure supplies and maintain administration, that the \textit{dux} would have authority over any soldiers there. This seems to be what the \textit{Notitia} is telling us: the \textit{ducatus} existed to coordinate the activities and maintenance of the soldiers under his sphere of authority rather than being concerned with military deployment. Hoffmann argued that the troops in Gaul during the first half of the 4th century, e.g. the \textit{equites catafactarii} Ambianenses, \textit{were all associated with the tractus Armoricani et Nervicani} for example before their departure to the east, which is a reminder that there seems to have been a considerable movement of soldiers in and out of the provinces during the 4th century.\textsuperscript{402} It is also probable that they moved around the various urban centres of the province, and its creation does imply a more regional, local supervision of military affairs from the second half of the 4th century, which does correspond with the evidence from the cities that imperial administration played an increasingly important role in the functioning of urban sites.\textsuperscript{403}

One can speculate on what the increasing number of local military commands tells us about the military presence in \textit{Belgica II} during the 4th century. One reason was probably administrative: logistical matters were being managed on an increasingly local basis and so requiring more immediate supervision.\textsuperscript{404} \textit{Duces} were granted equestrian status under the Tetrarchs and senatorial status under Valentinian.\textsuperscript{405} This implies that their role was becoming increasingly important as the century progressed. \textit{Belgica II}’s strategic importance given its position on the main route to Britain, and the series of military usurpations in Gaul and Britain during the 4th century, suggests that by increasing the number of military commands it would ‘divide and rule’ and prevent excessive concentration of military

\textsuperscript{401} See section 2 for further discussion of this.
\textsuperscript{402} \textit{ND. Or.}, VI.36; D. Hoffmann, \textit{Das Spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum} (Munich, 1969), p. 196.
\textsuperscript{403} See section 3 for discussion of this.
\textsuperscript{404} This finds support in the evidence from Oudenburg in section 2.
\textsuperscript{405} \textit{C.Th.},6.23.1; \textit{C.Th.},6.24.11; \textit{ND. Occ.}, XXXVIII.10 ‘(Dux Belgicae Secundae) Officium autem habet idem vir spectabilis dux hoc modo.’
power.\textsuperscript{406} Practical and political factors are not incompatible, and in the absence of any decisive evidence in favour of one view, it would perhaps be more satisfactory to propose a series of overlapping concerns: worries that concentrating too much military power in the hands of one individual and the broadening of the \textit{limites} zones during the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} century made appointing more senior officers practical, and providing enhanced powers of patronage for the imperial government.\textsuperscript{407}

The relatively limited number of units under the \textit{ducatus}, and the wider context of the office in our sources, would suggest that rather than being a military frontier in the tactical sense of a linear defensive line, we should see the \textit{ducatus} presiding over a broad frontier region with particular bureaucratic tasks and responsibilities rather than merely commanding units in battle.\textsuperscript{408} But there is no reason why traditional Roman practice would not have been maintained, so that his authority was limited to soldiers in the province, which is what the \textit{Notitia} infers. One could argue that this appointment would have initiated a process of increased regionalism. This is hard to deny, and there can be no doubt that Roman units found themselves strung out across the provinces across the century, but the constant multiplication of officers also suggests a close focus on the hierarchy and authority of officers, which implies the maintenance of a strong institutional identity amongst the Roman soldiers of the province. They would probably have been strongly aware who their superior was.

\textbf{3.1.2 Military identity in Belgica II: Milites}\textsuperscript{409}

We only possess a handful of military inscriptions from \textit{Belgica} II, most of which date to the earlier part of our period. Those that will be discussed in the text are listed below:

\textsuperscript{409} There were nine major usurpations lead by military officers, or senatorial figures with strong military support, between Carausius in 286/7 and Jovinus in 411 see R. Urban, \textit{Gallia Rebellis: Erhebungen in Gallien im Spiegel Antiker Zeugnisse} (Stuttgart, 1999), pp. 96 – 114.

\textsuperscript{407} D. Potter, \textit{The Roman Empire at Bay} (London, 2004), pp. 526 – 575, develops a thesis that the imperial office increasingly became a prisoner of bureaucratic interests, that is the various military and civilian officials, and the late Roman state’ s interests were seconded to those of its employees. Potter argues that this trend is particularly observable in Valentinian’s reign. If this argument is followed it would suggest that the multiplication of offices was done for the benefit of those at court.

\textsuperscript{408} B. Isaac, \textit{Limits of Empire} (Oxford, 1992) makes this argument very forcefully for the Late Roman army in the East, and there is no reason not to see this as directly relevant to \textit{Belgica} II.

\textsuperscript{407} See Appendix 3 for photographs of some of the inscriptions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D(is) [M(anibus) E(t)] M(emoriae)/...Ianuarius imagin(ifer) N(umeri) Ursariens(sium) Cives/...Seq[uanorum] vix(it) annos/...VIII Severianus frat(er)/Memor(iam) posuit</td>
<td>To the Manes and the memory of Ianuarius, <em>imaginifer</em>, of the regiment of Ursarienses, citizen of the Sequani who lived 29(?) years. Severianus, his brother, raised this memorial.</td>
<td>Amiens</td>
<td>CIL XIII 3492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Val(erius) Durio Circ(or) N(umeri) Cataphr(actariorum) vix(it) an(nos) XXX</td>
<td>Valerius Durio, <em>Circitor</em> of the Cataphract Regiment lived for 30 years</td>
<td>Amiens</td>
<td>CIL XIII 3493 Schleiermacher no. 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D(is) M(anibus) E(t) M(emoriae) Val(erius) Lustus/ [E]q(ues?) vix(it) ann(os) XXXI scola/ provincialum in/ [s]tituit</td>
<td>To the Manes and the memory of Valerius Lustus, cavalryman, who lived 31 years. The <em>Schola</em> of the Provincials installed this</td>
<td>Amiens</td>
<td>CIL XIII 3494 Schleiermacher no. 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[D(is)] M(anibus)/ E(t) M(emoriae) Val(erius) Zurdiginus411/ Dec(urio) Ca[taphractariorum?]</td>
<td>To the Manes and the memory of Valerius Zurdiginus, <em>Decurion</em> of Cataphracts (?)</td>
<td>Amiens</td>
<td>CIL XIII 3495 Schleiermacher no. 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D(is) M(anibus)/Furius Antoninus circ(itor) n(umeri) Dal(matarum) vixit (a)nnos XXVI (?) dies XV/ h(oras) III memorian (sic)/ ei coll(egium) (?) eius possuit (denariorum) V mil(ibus de suo</td>
<td>To the Manes, Furius Antoninus, <em>circitor</em> of the <em>numerus</em> of Dalmatians, lived for 25 years, 3 months, 15 days and 3 hours. His college erected this to his memory for the sum of 5,040</td>
<td>Châlons-sur-Marne</td>
<td>CIL XIII 3457 Schleiermacher no. 91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

411 M. Schleiermacher, *ibid.*, p.208, restores Zurdigenu[s] but it is impossible to tell given the damage done to the relief.
| Plaianus equis/ in vixelatione/Dalmatorum V/ vixxit annos X (?)/ impe(n)dium de su/ denaria XXXVIIICCC | Plaianus, horseman of the vexillation of the Dalmatians, lived 40 (?) years, he put up this monument which cost 338 denarii. | Châlons-sur-Marne | CIL XIII 3458 |
| Memoria/ fecit Ursina/ coiogi suo ursi/-niano veterano/ de menapis/ vixxi annos xxxxxxxv(?) | To the memory of Ursinianus, veteran of the Menapii, who lived 75 (?) years. His wife Ursina had this made. | Paris | CIL XIII 3033 |
| Felix militiae sumpsit devota Jovinus Cingula, virtutum culmen provectus in altum: Bisque datus meritis equitum, peditumque magister, Extulit aeternum saecularum in saecula nomen, Sed pietate gravi tanta haec praeconia vincit, Insignesque triumphos religione dicavit, ut quem fama dabat rebus superaret honorem, Et vitam factis posset sperare perennem. Conscius hic sancto manantis fonte salutis, Sedem vivacem moribundis ponere membris, Corporis hospitium laetus metator adornat, Reddendos vitae salvari | Fortunate Jovinus, when he had taken up the devoted sword-belt, carried to the dizzy height of excellence: twice given the title of master of the horse and master of foot for his service, he acquired this everlasting name for himself for generation upon generation, but he surpassed these great commendations with his strong sense of piety, and he consecrated his glorious triumphs with sanctity, so that he could transcend the honour which fate was giving to the situation and so that he could hope for perpetual life through his deeds. Knowing that safety | Reims | CIL XIII 3256⁴¹² |

⁴¹² Recorded by Flodoard in the 10th century: Historia Remensis Ecclesiae VI.
providet artus. Omnipotens Christus judex venerabilis, atque Terribilis, pie, longanimis, spes fida precantum, Nobilis eximios famulis non imputat actus. Plus justo fidei ac pietatis praemia vincent.

sprang from the holy fountain here, he settled for an everlasting seat for his mortal limbs and he, the maker of boundaries, happily furnished his body's chamber and he foresaw that his limbs needed to be returned to life to be saved. All powerful Christ, the venerable judge, terrible, O pious one, patient, the trusty hope of those who pray, does not make account of the extraordinary gestures of a servant of noble birth. Let us prevail to the highest the rewards of faith and piety.

What can we learn from such a small sample? It is very difficult to generalise too far given the difficulties establishing the original context of the memorials. The Amiens inscriptions can be dated, as a terminus post quem, to the late 3rd or early 4th century on account of the

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413 They were discovered in 1848 face down as part of the construction of a new road between Soissons and Amiens; B. Pichon, Amiens: Carte Archéologique de la Gaule (Paris, 2009), pp. 247 – 48.
nomen ‘Valerius.’ A comparison of the two styles of relief for Valerius Iustus and Valerius Durio would strongly suggest that they were contemporaneous, and would indicate a degree of uniformity amongst the commemorative traditions used by the cavalry soldiers stationed here. Durio’s name implies that he was from northwest Europe. Iustus is an extremely common name and probably western in origin. Ianuarius tells us he was from the Sequani (cives sequanorum). The sculptural relief of Valerius Zurdiginus is in quite a different style from the other cavalrymen, and portrays him with a slave or groom. The differences could be because he was a decurion, and so wished to emphasise his higher status, or because he was from another unit of foreign extraction. Another explanation for the differences could be that he died at a different time than the other two cavalrymen and fashions of commemoration had changed, or simply that he chose a different tradition to emulate. This could allow a potential comparison with the cavalrymen at Châlons-sur-

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414 The using of onomastics to date inscriptions is problematic as cognomen associated with emperors could be dated to at least a 50 year period see for example the discussion in S. Phang, The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 BC – AD 235) (New York, 2001), p. 150. The best accepted way to identify soldiers from the 4th century and later is the use of “Flavius,” as at the various military inscriptions from the cemetery at Concordia which are dated to the 5th century by Handley, but some are associated with the Frigidus campaign by Hoffmann in D. Hoffmann, ‘Die Spätromischen Soldaten Grabinschriften von Concordia’, Museum Helveticum, 20 (1963), 2 – 57; M. Handley, Death, Society and Culture : Inscriptions and Epitaphs in Gaul and Spain, AD 300-750 (Oxford, 2003), pp. 16 – 17. The use of the nomen ‘Valerius’ is usually associated with the Tetrarchic period as ‘Valerius’ was the family name of Diocletian that was adopted by Maximian when he assumed his position as part of the imperial college. This would suggest that we can date the Amiens inscriptions to the period after 285. The stele were not actually found in the city itself, but a few miles outside at St Achuel. The deposition date of the inscriptions at can be assumed to have 305-09 at the earliest on account of the milestone inscription buried with it (Maximian Daia’s reign as Caesar), but one would assume it was a considerable time later given that one would expect the regiment would have maintained its cemetery if it was still in the region. ‘ The Ianuarius inscription has been restored by X. Dupuis to read [Valerius] as well, but even if one doesn’t accept that identification the shield and cloak makes it very likely that the inscription is from the end of the 3rd century at the very latest. There is contemporary evidence of catafracti as the mainstay of Tetrarchic armies: the Equites Singulares Augusti are portrayed as cataphracts on the Arch of Galerius and the Arch of Constantine which tells us how closely such heavy cavalry were associated with the military image of these emperors (while not suggesting that the horsemen at Amiens were in the same level of unit – they would surely have told us). They may well have been commissioned from the same sculpture. Images of the inscriptions are in Appendix 1 and also found in M. Schleiermacher, Römische Reitergrabsteine: die Kaiserzeitlichen Reliefs des Triumphierenden Reiters (Bonn, 1984), pp. 206 – 208.

415 The name is also attested in Belgium (AE 1956), and near Brampton on Hadrian’s Wall (RIB 2063).

416 Belgica (39) is joint second with Pannonia (39) to Italy (60) with records for this name: B. Lörincz, Onomasticon Provinciarum Europae Latinarum Vol. 2: Cabalicius – Ixus (Vienna, 1999), p. 210.

417 Onomastically, Zurdiginus appears to be of eastern extraction. B. Lörincz Onomasticon Provinciarum Europae Latinarum Vol. 4: Quadrati – Zures (Vienna, 2002), p. 192, lists Zurdigius as the only example of this name found, so it cannot be proven that it was not local. However other similar names are usually found particularly in the Balkans or further east e.g. Zordeseiosus (IG Bulg. 872) or Zoticus (a common name across the east, though there are few in the west B. Lörincz, ibid., p. 191.

418 There is a strong argument that there was a cavalry unit based at Amiens for a period of time in the 4th century - see the discussion in section 3.
Marne whose unit association links them with Dalamatia, though there is no guarantee that they were actually originally from there or that they were precisely contemporaneous.\(^{420}\)

Valerius Iustus, *sc(h)ola provincialum*, has been the source of some controversy, as it has not been recorded anywhere else. It has been suggested that the *scola provincialum* may represent a military unit. The *scola* were units of significant status in the 4\(^{th}\) century, appearing as bodyguard regiments under the authority of the *Magister Officiorum* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.\(^{421}\) Such an attribution seems unlikely given the idiosyncratic nomenclature of this inscription. Another suggestion was that it was a paramilitary or militia unit raised during the chaotic events of the 3\(^{rd}\) century from the civilian population, perhaps having a relationship with groups like the *iuvenes* who would have had a suitable background.\(^{422}\) There are some parallels to this *ad hoc* arrangement in the mid-3\(^{rd}\) century.\(^{423}\) This is not particularly convincing, however. All the other evidence, from

\(^{420}\) ‘Furius’ is mainly found in Italy (43% of surviving records) with a few scattered around the western and Danubian provinces, B. Lörincz, *Onomasticon Provinciarum Europae Latinarum Vol. 4: Quadrati – Zures* (Vienna, 2002), pp. 155 – 56; the name Plaianus is uniquely found in this inscription: B. Lörincz, *Onomasticon Provinciarum Europae Latinarum Vol. 3: Labareus - Pythea* (Vienna, 2000), p. 145. Some have suggested that the name was originally from Illyria, M. Chossenot and F. Lefevre, ‘Les stèles funéraires gallo-romaines de Châlons-sur-Marne,’ *Société d’Agriculture, Commerce, Sciences et Arts de la Marne* (1981), p. 48. M. Chossenot and F. Lefevre, ‘Les Stèles Funéraires Gallo-Romaines de Châlons-sur-Marne,’ *Société d’Agriculture, Commerce, Sciences et Arts de la Marne* XCVI (1981), 45 – 62, suggest a whole range of dates from the reign of Gallienus to the late 4th century. I would place them between 250 - 300 due to the name ‘Furius’ and the use of terms ‘numerus’ and ‘vexillatio’ which in this context seem more appropriate to the 3rd rather than the 4th century.\(^{421}\) The *scola* took their name from the room of the *principium* in a Roman fort where soldiers (or more likely officers) could meet when were permitted to form *collegia* by Septimius Severus. Some historians have argued that this signified a particular link to the Emperor, but this is unclear. Y. Le Bohec, *The Imperial Roman Army* (London, 2000), pp. 192 -3.

\(^{422}\) J. Massy and D. Bayard, *Amiens Romain* (Amiens, 1983), p. 249, argue for that this group were a local militia incorporated into the army. For the *iuvenes* see J. Wiesehöfer ‘iuvenes (iuventus)’ *Brill’s New Pauly* (Leiden, 2012).

\(^{423}\) The “victory altar” discovered at Augsburg describes local people (*populares*) helping soldiers fighting the Semnones and luthungi in Raetia in AD 260: *In h(onorem) d(omus) d(ivinae) / deae sanctae Victorie / ob barbaros gentis Semnonum / sive louthungorum die / VIII et VII kal(endarum) Maiar(um) caesos / fugatosque a miliitus prov(inciae) / Raetiae sed et germanicianis / itemque popularibus excussis / multis milibus Italorum captivor(um) / compos votorum suorum / libens merito posuit / dedicata III idus Septembres) imp(eratoris) / [Postumo AuJJg(usto) et [Honoran]tio co(n)s(uli)]* (In honour of the divine household and to the sacred goddess Victory. [Erected] on account of the barbarian peoples Semnones and luthungi killed or put to flight on the 24\(^{th}\) and 25\(^{th}\) April by the soldiers of the province of Raetia and from the German (provinces) and also local forces, and for the rescue of many thousands of Italian prisoners. In fulfilment of their vows Marcus Simplicinius Genialis, *vir perfectissimus* acting on behalf of the provincial governor, with the same army gladly erected (this altar) to one deserving of it. Dedicated on 11\(^{th}\) September in the consuls of our lord emperor Postumus Augustus and Honoratianus.) See M. Bakker, *Der Siegesaltar zur Juthungenschlacht von 260 n. Chr.*, *Antike Welt*, 24.4, (1993), 274-277; H. Lavagne, ‘Une Nouvelle Inscription d’Augsburg et les Causes de l’Usurpation de Postume,’ *Comptes Rendus des Séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 138 (1994), 431-446.

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commemoration style and context, implies Valerius Iustus was attached to a formal military unit. All the inscription tells us is that the scola put up this memorial to Lustus, not that it was the name of the military unit to which he belonged. It could therefore even have been a form of funerary college to allow ordinary soldiers to put up monuments, like the collegium explicitly mentioned erecting the monument to Furius Antoninus at Châlons.\footnote{For a discussion of collegium and a critique of the overly narrow understanding of these groups by T. Mommsen see E. Rebillard, The Care of the Dead in Late Antiquity (New York, 2010), pp. 37 – 56.}

Our discussion so far has highlighted the dangers of making generalisations that would apply to the whole province of Belgica II across the period under investigation. However, given that the Amiens stones all probably came from a similar context, in terms of landscape and chronology, we can make some tentative suggestions by comparison with the other examples about what they may tell us about military identities in the early 4\textsuperscript{th} century.

\subsection*{a) The military unit}

The fact that Zurdiginus and Durio were both probably \textit{catafractii} (if we accept the reconstruction of the damaged Zurdiginus stone) is interesting given the degree of heterodoxy in unit nomenclature: Durio is from a N(umerus); Zurdiginus only uses “\textit{catafractarii}”, while Lustus calls himself an \textit{eques} and makes no mention of his unit at all (unless it is the \textit{schola provincialum}). The fact that the soldiers generally identify themselves by their unit and military vocation (hor seman etc.) should be no surprise. Such features were fundamental to early imperial epigraphy when formulaic representations commonly identified the deceased’s unit and function.\footnote{See for example the large number of military tombstones at Mainz for example where common formulae and relief sculptures are the majority. V. Hope, ‘Construction of Identity in Military Tombstones,’ in G. Oliver, ed., The Epigraphy of Death: Studies in the History and Society of Greece and Rome (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 160 – 177.} Our corpus continues this to some degree: tombstones all seem to follow common formulae (\textit{vixit}, lived for) giving the age of the deceased.\footnote{Zurdiginus’ age may have been recorded on the broken section which has disappeared.} The variety of nomenclature for military unit is notable and there are two ways to read this. The men could all have been from different cavalry units, hence the differences in names. The second possibility is that they were from the same unit but displayed their affiliations in different ways. There is no way of confirming either hypothesis, but I would argue for the former interpretation on the grounds that the differences are so
striking. The only evidence that suggests they were from the same unit is the later regiment mentioned in the *Notitia*, which probably reflects the situation at the end of the 4th century, and could easily be the result of several units being incorporated into a new one.427 What this suggests is that the military unit was usually (though possibly not always), one the fundamental bases of an individual soldier’s identity. The subtle differences between the graves, would imply that those commemorating the deceased were keen, in some ways, to distinguish them from each other, while incorporating some common symbolic language too – for example in the sculptural forms, though this could simply have been based on whatever was available. This seems to be confirmed by the epitaphs at Châlons, which could be from the same Dalmatian regiment, but the differences of nomenclature and appearance of the grave, suggests they could be from different groups. If we restore the Paris inscription as being for a veteran from a unit of *Menapii*, then there is further support for this, given that his unit identity was still important even after his retirement.428 The use of the unit name is the main common practice when compared with other inscriptions of soldiers found in Gaul from the 4th century onwards.429 Jovinus has no regimental affiliations, but it is interesting how he references one of the simplest aspects of a military identity, the cingula. What these elements suggest is how, while there were clearly uniform, collective symbols of military identity that all *milites* would understand, each military unit gave a particular coherence and variation to an individual soldier’s sense of identity, and the variety of different practices could show how different units could develop their own traditions within a wider institutional culture.

b) Hierarchy and status

The most obvious statement of status is Jovinus’ epitaph which is very different context from the others in chronology (370s), social status and religion. As well as recording his high

427 *ND. Or.*, VI.36 *Equites catafractarii Ambianenses*: this regiment could even have been a creation *de novo*.

428 There are two units of *Menapii* recorded in the *Notitia*: *ND. Or.* VIII. 35: *Menapii* (*Legio Comitatensis*); *ND. Occ.*, VII 83 *Menapii Seniores* (*Legio Comitatensis*). This is usually read as commemorating a veteran of the *Menapii*, and the failure to identify the *seniores* implies that this occurred before the division of 364 under Valentinian and Valens see R.S.O. Tomlin, ‘Seniores–Iuniores in the Late Roman Field Army’, *American Journal of Philology*, 93 (1972), 253–78. Note that subsequent inscription finds have made Tomin’s findings obsolete, but precise dating is impossible here, so the matter will not be pursued.

429 For example the soldier at Bordeaux commemorated as ‘*de numero mattiacorum seniorum*’ *ILCV*, no. 554 or the soldier from the same regiment at Concordia: *CIL* XIII 8737.
birth (*nobilitas*), the statement of his success in achieving high rank is obvious enough, but the lengthy part of the inscription shows that while his military status gave him authority, most of the inscription focused on his piety and religious virtues, which were far more important to the ecclesiastical context in which his memory was now operating. This could of course be the product of Flodoard’s transcription – it is unclear how far he elaborated. Despite its idiosyncrasies, it does show how the deceased’s status is negotiated within the context in which the epitaph is displayed. The use of promoted positions (e.g. *decurio*, *circitor*, *imaginifer*) on most of the tombstones shows that hierarchical military titles were aspects of status that were to be displayed, and an important part of commemorating *milites*. Zuridiginus’ display of his groom/slave holding his horse is another statement of his status as a decurion. The use of horses in the case of the cavalrymen; full military equipment in the case of Ianuarius; shows how important military identity was to the deceased. Given the cost of funerary monuments, these must be seen as statements of how *milites* remained an élite group in society. The fact the two Châlons cavalrymen displayed how much they cost can be seen as a form of internal competition between soldiers, as well as displays of pride for the commemorators.

The ‘Epigraphic habit’ appears to have been relatively uncommon in northern Gaul compared with other parts of the Empire. From a late antique epigraphic perspective, Gaulish funerary inscriptions are generally of individuals of high status. As has been discussed already, funerary practices should not be seen as mirrors to social reality. Even if

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430 Given the antipathy of many churchmen in his day to *milites* on wouldn’t be surprised if there was an element of didacticism in his use of the inscription promoting the religious life to combatants; T. Head and R. Landes, *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around 1000* (London, 1992).

431 Calculating the cost of these monuments is very difficult, if not impossible for Gaul, especially given the monetary problems the Empire faced in the late 3rd and 4th centuries. There would be a degree of variability as well. Duncan-Jones estimates that for *miles* and NCOs in Roman Africa during the early Roman period the cost would be between 20% and 80% see R. Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 79 – 80; the cost in Italy was much higher for tombstones (nearly 900% more in the median cost than Africa) but the samples are difficult to compare because of the very different social categories 127 – 30.

432 Whether this was due to a failure to adopt cultural norms with sufficient enthusiasm or simply due to a shortage of skills and materials is debatable: G. Woolf, ‘Power and the Spread of Writing in the West’, in A.K. Bowman and G. Woolf, eds., *Literacy and Power in the Roman World* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 84 –98.

433 There are arguments that Christianisation led to more people of lowly status being commemorated, B. Shaw, ‘Seasons of death: aspects of Mortality in Imperial Rome’, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 86 (1996), 100 – 138, but a) this wouldn’t really apply to Gaul in the early 4th century and b) there is plenty of evidence that this isn’t the case generally; see M. Handley, *Death, Society and Culture: Inscriptions and Epitaphs in Gaul and Spain A.D. 300–750* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 36 – 39 and certainly not for northern Gaul, even if a long-term view is taken of the epigraphic habit between AD 300 – 700; M. Handley, *ibid.*, pp. 46 – 48.
one does not take these stones as a literal reflection of status, the effort made to commemorate these individuals by those who invested in the monument, and the apparent variation in styles, could be argued for attempts at differentiation between individuals, and thus show evidence of social competition. The fact the two horsemen at Châlons both had advertised how much was spent on their tombs is an interesting tradition, which could imply a degree of conspicuous consumption. How intense this was can only be speculated on. If the cavalry soldiers at Amiens, and those at Châlons, were, despite the above supposition, from the same regiment, one could argue social competition within the military unit was very intense. The fact these epitaphs are generally ‘NCOs’, rather than senior officers, is interesting as it shows how soldiers lower down the hierarchy, and their commemorators, sought to invest capital into their commemoration. The suggestion that the *scola provincialum* represents a form of *collegium* that funded Valerius Iustus’ burial shows that ordinary horsemen also were complicit in this social competition, in the way that Plaianus did too. Given the probably small size of cavalry regiments in this period, and the expense of maintenance, it is perhaps not surprising that social competition would emerge. The tombstone of Ursinianus at Paris also shows that his quasi-military identity as a veteran was still worth being recorded for posterity.

c) Complex identities

An important conclusion one can draw from these tombstones is how a ‘military’ identity was only one aspect of how individual *milites* would think about themselves and their position in society. If the restoration of *Cives Sequanorum* is correct, it illustrates how Ianuarius’ local origin was an important part of his identity, and these links were not obliterated by military service. Of course, Roman soldiers had often celebrated their origins in death in the earlier period. The fact that none of the other examples did show how individuals had a different set of influences whereby their identity in death could be constructed. Ursinianus’ inscription can have an alternative reading as highlighting his place

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435 E.g. CIL XII 6921 (Mainz) C(aius) Iulius C(aii) F(ilius) Vol(tinia tribu) Andiccus mil(es) leg(ionis) XVI anno(rum) XLV stip(endiorum) XXI h(ic) s(itus) e(st) heres pos(uit)
(Gaius Iulius Andiccus, son of Gaius, of the Voltinia tribe, soldier of the Sixteenth Legion, age 45, served 21 years, he lies here. The heir set this up).
of origin, in the civitas Menapiorum (i.e. the veteran from the Menapii) rather than of the Menapii regiment), rather than his regiment.\textsuperscript{436} Whether we accept this view or not, a parallel can be drawn from the famous inscription from Aquincum of the Frank in Roman service usually dated to the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Century:

\begin{quote}
Francus ego civis Romanus miles in armis/ egregia virtute tuli bello mea dextra sem[p]er
\end{quote}

This is often translated as “I, a Frankish citizen, and a Roman soldier under arms...” and used as a statement of the multiple identities Roman soldiers recruited from outside the Empire maintained.\textsuperscript{438} The idea of a Frankish citizen in a Roman context is very odd, and the syntax means that ‘civis’ could be better defined by ‘Romanus.’ I would therefore follow the reading proposed by Rigsby: “Francus ego, civis Romanus, miles in armis.” Thus “I, a Frank, a Roman citizen, a soldier in arms, brought to war with exemplary courage....”\textsuperscript{439} In fact, I would go so far to suggest that ‘Francus’ should be read as his nomen. What one means by a Frank at this moment in time is difficult to suggest, but it may be due to a connection with northern Gaul. It certainly seems to have been important to the individual’s identity on the Danube frontier. This was itself a change from before AD 212, when the differences in citizenship were displayed on tombstones by soldiers of legiones and auxilia for example.\textsuperscript{440}

d) The wider community

Interestingly the tombstones of the catafractarii, Zurdiginus and Durio, only mention their unit, though in Zurdiginus’ this may be because the inscription is incomplete. Ianuarius of the Ursarienses mentions a frater. This does not necessarily mean that he was Ianuarius’s blood relation, but could have been a colleague or a half-brother, who may well have been serving in the same unit given the famous Tetrarchic insistence that sons of soldiers served which presumably meant brothers. Ursinianus, the veteran was commemorated by his wife, while Furius Antoninus and Valerius Iustsus (possibly) were remembered by associations,

\textsuperscript{436} This may be weak given that the “de...regiment formula” was quite common.

\textsuperscript{437} CIL III 3576 (ILS 2814).


probably of fellow soldiers. The evidence we have is that the funerary rituals spoke to a variety of different individuals. To understand fully the social context of commemoration we need information on the location and actions of these memorials, but this is unfortunately lacking, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn. The Amiens corpus was already moved from its original context when they were discovered. However, given these were recycled in the same location, there is a possibility they were originally located in the same place. If so, this implies the memorials were placed in a particular military cemetery (or part of one). The arguments that have been made for shared commemorative traditions, and the variations between them, would make more sense if they were being displayed in a common area. The group of the living mentioned in these epitaphs can therefore be said to be part of the extended military community we discussed in chapter 1.

The arguments of Woolf and Meyer, that epigraphy declined in the 3rd century as distinctions between different groups blurred, one example being those between the military and wider society, can therefore be brought into some focus. These inscriptions show how resilient a military identity was, and if we take their view that identities were constantly being socially constructed, especially in periods of social change, the stationing of the military units in Amiens and Châlons may have provoked the need to make a strong restatement of their differentiation from the civilian communities they now came into contact with. The use of such a traditional form of commemoration indicates how far military identities still operated within a very culturally conservative milieu, but the differences that can be drawn in style from the commemorative practices of early centuries also shows the dynamism of military identities in this period.

### 3.1.3 Military identities during the 4th and early 5th centuries

A major weakness of focusing on such a narrow corpus is that generalised statements are immediately problematic. How long did the military identities of the late 3rd and early 4th century survive into the 5th century? This is difficult to say due to almost complete absence of any military inscriptions in this period, which could be in itself an indicator of change. Jovinus’ inscription, while difficult to assess, seems to show that the basic sense of militia, in

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441 Almost all of these were found in the 19th century and so were poorly recorded.
service to the emperor (which he moves onto service to God), continued. The best analogy is an inscription from Bavai, which can be dated securely to the early 5th century, refers to an official in the military administration.\textsuperscript{442}

\textit{Hic depositus in p(ace) Lucinus/ Scrinar(ius) bene merens/ D(omino) Hon(orio) Aug VI C(o)ns(ule) Vixit Annos XXXIII} (Chi-rho monogram) (CIL XIII 395)

Here lies in peace Lucinus the Scrinarius of good merit who lived 44 years, in the year of our lord Honorius during his Sixth consulship (AD 404)

This operates within a slightly different paradigm, namely the primacy of the Christian identity and the loyalist statements to Honorius. While this form of consular dating is very rare in northern Gaul, and entirely absent from the three provinces of \textit{Gallia Lugdenensis} and, apart from Bavai, in \textit{Belgica II}, though there are two in \textit{Belgica I}.\textsuperscript{443} The persistence of a distinct Roman professional identity in relation to the administration of the imperial bureaucracy into the early 5th century, could be argued to suggest a military identity continued to exist, but this argument is \textit{ex silentio} and weak.

The ‘military’ cemetery at Oudenburg, which is usually dated middle to late 4th century, gives us an interesting comparison to our epitaph sample. There can be little doubt that these individuals were occupants of the fort.\textsuperscript{444} No inscribed tombstones have survived, and we do not have graves for the soldier at Amiens, so any statement is conditional, but it would appear that the burial rites had evolved quite considerably over the 4th century. Space prohibits an exhaustive analysis of the cemetery, and this has been done commendably already.\textsuperscript{445} The conclusions are not straightforward: only a small proportion of the graves are dated, and some skeletons cannot have their gender identified clearly.

\textsuperscript{442} This inscription was discovered in 1762 at Bavai but regarded as a forgery by a local historian, Desjardins, who claimed that the inscription was a forgery. Desjardins was followed by Edmond Le Blant, who pointed out that the stone named only a single consul and thus Otto Hirsch History yielded accordingly relegated it to the category of ‘Inscriptiones Falsae vel Aliene’ in the appropriate volume of the \textit{Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum}. Delmaire argues that the single consul is actually evidence for its authenticity as the eastern consul was not recognised in 404: R. Delmaire, \textit{Année Epigraphique} (2002), 359–60, no. 1007; R. Delmaire, ‘Notes Épigraphiques no. 348’, \textit{Revue du Nord}, 84 (2003), 125–32. See also J. Knight, ‘An Inscription from Bavai and the Fifth-Century Christian Epigraphy of Britain’, \textit{Britannia}, 41 (2010), 283-292.


\textsuperscript{444} Coins from across the 4th century are found, but the latest coin found on the site is dated to 388 see J. Mertens and L. van Impe, \textit{Het Laat-Romeins Grafveld van Oudenburg} (Brussels, 1971), pp. 33 – 34.

What can be concluded is a small majority of the 216 inhumations found are men. There are significant numbers of women, but very few children have been identified. About 64% of the graves were furnished, and of these two main rites have been established. The first has large number of personal ornaments and pottery, but no animal remains. The second group has pottery, glass vessels and animal remains, but no personal ornaments. The main personal item associated with the first group male burials, as crossbow brooches and belt sets, which are placed in worn and unworn positions.

As we have already discussed in chapter 2, these artefacts do not in themselves mean a military identity. However, the main concentrations of the crossbow brooches are found at Krefeld-Gellep, Nijmegen and Oudenburg, all of which were forts. The absence of ‘weapons’ (there are two knives, which are commonly found in all manner of burial contexts) makes no difference. Cooke argues that the distinct burial rites are ‘military’ and ‘civilian.’ There seems to be some ‘blurring’ between the two rites as the 4th century progresses, but whether this means these identities were becoming indistinct is hard to say. The problem is we do not know whether we are looking at members of local communities in the cemetery or the extended military community itself. However this is resolved, I would suggest these rituals and the variations even within the different groups (3 are buried with gold crossbow brooches) show the similar combination of ‘local’ and universal ‘military’ identities at work we saw at on the reliefs of the early 4th century. As Halsall argues, these burials are a text for the commemorators to read, and the complex identities of individuals had many sources. However, at Oudenburg, it seems the symbols of militia were the most important in this context, which was possibly a function of their peripheral position.

Conclusion

What these examples suggest is the complex range of identities that were available to soldiers: a general professional identity (*miles* or *veteranus*); their unit; their family (whether blood or institutional – which would be an extension of the unit), and their origin. These were strongly maintained by a strong institutional hierarchy, which became more
locally focused by the end of the 4th century, but not necessarily ‘integrated.’ This would support the suggestions made in chapter 1, that military identity in the 4th century is far more than simply being part of the “army” but a complex one reflecting the multi-faceted role of the army in society.

Section 2: Forts in Belgica II

As already discussed in chapter 2, defining a “fort” in the late Roman period is not straightforward, though parallels in the Rhineland and Britain suggest that distinct military sites remained in existence until the 5th century. Unlike many sites in Roman Britain, for example, the internal structures in sites of late Roman Belgica II (whether cities or forts) are poorly understood, which presents an obstacle to elucidating their precise nature. We rely heavily on artefacts to interpret function, though this is also problematic. Although there were important fundamental change from the early imperial period in architectural styles and the number of fortified sites in the province, there are important aspects of continuity which can be ignored. Specific ‘forts’ can still be identified in the material record. This suggests there was a formal, distinctive, late Roman military identity persisted until the 5th century.

3.2.1 Defining late Roman fortifications in Belgica II

There are two main geographic concentrations of ‘forts’ in Belgica II: the Saxon Shore; the ‘Limes Belgicus’ which is usually called the Bavay-Tongres road. Brulet proposed a model to identify forts in this period based on size: type I being large forts (approximately 2ha in size), type II medium sized forts (0.25ha – 0.4ha) and type III being a range of miscellaneous small forts.

See Appendix 1 for full survey of sites mentioned in the text. Some authorities speculate on additional forts on the northwest coast e.g. at Bruges, but in the absence of any evidence they won’t be discussed here.


See for example the quality of discussion achieved by N. Hodgson and P. Bidwell, ‘Auxiliary Barracks in a New Light: Recent Discoveries on Hadrian’s Wall’, Britannia, 35 (2004), 121-157, which relies on the high quality excavations and recording in Romano-British forts over the last few decades.
This developed Petrokovits’ model of frontier forts; fortified urban centres that could or couldn’t hold military units; rural fortifications and refuges. Using this scheme for Belgica II gives the following results:

Table 2 Fort morphology according to Brulet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Nature of occupation (Brulet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oudenburg</td>
<td>2.7ha</td>
<td>Large fort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelles</td>
<td>0.4ha</td>
<td>Medium fort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberchies I</td>
<td>0.72ha</td>
<td>Medium fort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberchies II</td>
<td>2ha</td>
<td>Large fort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Givry</td>
<td>0.14ha</td>
<td>Small fortified structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morlanwelz I</td>
<td>0.16ha</td>
<td>Small fortified structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morlanwelz II</td>
<td>0.9ha</td>
<td>Medium fort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavay</td>
<td>2ha – 4ha</td>
<td>Large fort/fortified urban centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Famars</td>
<td>1.8ha/ 2.2ha</td>
<td>Large fort/fortified urban centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noyon</td>
<td>2.5ha</td>
<td>Large fort/fortified urban centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

453 H. Petrokovits, ‘Fortifications in the North Western Roman Empire from the Third to the Fifth Centuries’, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 61 (1971), 189-93.
This would suggest a larger number of forts in the landscape in the late Roman period than earlier, but also a blurring of distinctions between different sites and their functions. This analysis is too superficial. As the construction of stone walls, often with external projecting towers, was common around many different sites in the late Roman period, a broader range of criteria are required to assess identification of a “fort” as opposed to a ‘fortified urban centre’. To further the analysis the following criteria will be used in the definitions:

- Did the site accommodate a civilian population or a military garrison?
- What was the nature of the structure and its internal buildings?
- Are the artefacts within a site military or civilian?
- Was the site a product of military investment or local, civilian, initiative?
- How did the sites relate to the wider context as part of a defensive system?

Long-term occupation by a garrison is a useful means of classifying a fort, though given their presence in cities (see section 3), an insufficient one. Units mentioned at sites believed to be forts in the Notitia, with clear associations of place, allow one to posit garrisons. With the decline in epigraphy, this is the best evidence we have. The Notitia focuses on the offices available for allocation rather than listing the military resources of the Empire, so they may be describing officers’ headquarters rather than where the soldiers were based. Attributing precise dates or length of occupation is also problematic. Despite these reservations one can still argue that there was a unit of that name at these sites at some point during the 4th / early 5th centuries (see table 2 for details).

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463 For the common nature of stone walls see S. Johnson, Late Roman Fortifications (London, 1983), pp. 31 – 54.
464 See the introduction for a full discussion of the fort issue. Debate on occupation of forts by individual army units is based on Vindolanda tablet no. 154 which probably refers to the fort’s second occupation period during the late 1st century AD which shows that members of the Cohort of the Tungrians were often spread over several different locations, often significantly removed from the original fort see A. Bowman, Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier: Vindolanda and its people (London, 1994), pp. 22 – 24. This is supported by P. Southern and K. Dixon, The Late Roman Army (London, 1996), p. 140, following J. Mann, ‘The Historical Development of the Saxon Shore’, in V. Maxfield, ed., The Saxon Shore: a handbook (Exeter, 1989), p. 2.
Table 3 Forts in Belgica II with garrison evidence from the Notitia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fort</th>
<th>Notitia Reference</th>
<th>Other evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portus Epatiacus (Oudenburg)</td>
<td>ND. Occ. XXXVII.9 <em>Tribunus militum Nerviorum, Portu Epatiacci</em></td>
<td>“Military” cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcis (Marquise)?</td>
<td>ND. Occ. XXXVII.7 <em>Equites Dalmatae, Marcis in litore Saxonicus</em></td>
<td>None – no evidence has been revealed of this fort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geminiacum (Liberchies II)</td>
<td>ND Occ. V 246 <em>Geminiacenses</em></td>
<td>Military artefacts associated with both phases of occupation: Liberchies I and II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is also a considerable range of different structures that can be identified amongst the sites that have been called ‘forts’ and these have to be taken into account.

Table 4 constructions – walls/internal structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Occupation phases/dates</th>
<th>Structures</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oudenburg</td>
<td>2.7ha</td>
<td>IVa c.260 - 270 IVb c.270 – 280 Va c.320 – 340 Vb c. 370 – 400</td>
<td>Wall construction</td>
<td>‘Military’ Cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quadrangular stone fortification 153m x 176m Ditches around the wall</td>
<td>Part of Saxon Shore fortification system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Wall Construction</th>
<th>Interior Structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revelles</td>
<td>0.4ha</td>
<td>c.260 – c.280</td>
<td>V-shaped ditch and palisade</td>
<td>Series of wooden postholes hint at internal buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberchies I</td>
<td>0.72ha</td>
<td>Ia c. 260 – c. 280, Ib c. 280 – c. 310</td>
<td>A series of ditches and wooden palisades</td>
<td>No internal structures known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberchies II</td>
<td>2ha</td>
<td>Ia c. 300 – c. 320, IIb c.330 – c. 380</td>
<td>Quadrangular stone fortification (45 x 56.5m)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interior structures**
- Timber-framed constructions
- Official building with plaster “hospital”
- Living units
- Industrial activities
- Bath complex
- Animal grazing

**Wall construction**
- Amiens and Rouen road; 8km from Amiens
- Middle of the vicus.
- Tongres – Bavay road
- Large fortified complex 1400m to the west of the original

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>360</th>
<th>Walls 2.8m high and circular towers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IIc</td>
<td>c. 390 – c. 420</td>
<td>Ditches covering larger area surround the wall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The perimeter of the site is complex as there is evidence for a large ditch, which is interrupted on the north west side by a small palisaded ditch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Interior structures</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Buildings constructed against the wall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two annexes to the fortification on the east side, which appear to be bath houses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West side there may be the remains of a wooden barracks structure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0.14ha</th>
<th><strong>Construction</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. 260 – c. 275</td>
<td>The structure was built on a foundation of loose stones alternating with placed stone fixed without mortar. The suggestion is that the site was a monument, reused as a fortification, outside the <em>vicus</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II c. 320 – c. 350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Interior structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morlanwelz I</td>
<td>0.16ha</td>
<td>c. 250 – 300</td>
<td>Square building, with ditch and palisade, corresponding to a postal station.</td>
<td>The internal structure appears to be wooden building based on several pieces of wood used as foundations. There only seems to be one phase of construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morlanwelz II</td>
<td>0.9ha</td>
<td>c. 300 – 350</td>
<td>The second structure was moved closer to the road and a square tower, 30m x 30m, with 3m thick walls was constructed. There also seems to be a ditch around the tower, but it is only on one side.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavay</td>
<td>2ha –</td>
<td>c. 280 – c. 300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Famars</td>
<td>I. c. 360 – 380 II? c. 380 – c. 430</td>
<td>Fortified early imperial forum – 2 phases of construction, with petit appareil and towers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noyon</td>
<td>Early 4th century?</td>
<td>Walls were constructed in a very similar form to other cities in southern Belgica II.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Internal structures**
- Second castrum – barracks
- No clearly understood internal structures known

**Construction**
- First phase saw the bath walls used in the structure and complete pentagon structure created. Ditches surrounding the style.
- None known

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As we have already discussed in chapter 3 assessing ‘military’ artefacts in the 4th century is quite problematic. As these were often recorded in the less scientific excavations of the 19th and early 20th centuries, there is a problem of knowing the precise context in which objects are found. Researchers have noticed the lack of military artefacts in comparable Roman forts such as the “Shore Forts” in Britain. This perhaps should not be surprising given that military units were now smaller than they had been.

Table 5 "Military" artefacts found at ‘fort’ sites in Belgica II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Swords</th>
<th>Lances</th>
<th>Chain mail</th>
<th>Arrows</th>
<th>Ballista</th>
<th>Cavalry</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Crossbow brooches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oudenburg</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberchies I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberchies II</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Givry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morlanwelz I</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morlanwelz II</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavay</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Famars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.Noyon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

474 This could be due to the lack of systematic excavation, and the possibility that most inhabitants of these structures took care of their military equipment given the expense involved hence there is a low rate of loss.

475 A. Pearson, *The Roman Shore Forts: Coastal Defences of Southern Britain* (Stroud, 2002), p. 157, notices the limited weapons finds, comparing it with the more common finds of clothing items such as brooches, as well as the numerous female items which imply family inhabitation of the fortification walls. However, such patterns are quite compatible with the notion of military community we have already explored in chapter 1.

476 Shields, tent pegs, knives, scabbards etc.
When all of this information is factored in several observations can be made. In terms of ‘forts’ the clearest evidence for sites that fulfill this definition are Oudenburg and Liberchies II. Both sites are focused on a square shaped stone fortified wall, though there is some variation in the overall structure, as at Liberchies II several key buildings were outside the fort itself, though protected by a ditch. Only the south-west corner of the fort at Oudenburg has been excavated, but the series of buildings that have been found are compatible with a fort: the potential hospital, the bath building and the industrial area.\textsuperscript{477} Oudenburg, which can be identified with some confidence as \textit{Portus Epatiaci} in the \textit{Notitia}, had a garrison: the \textit{milites Neruiorum}.\textsuperscript{478} What is known from its internal layout as well as the ‘military’ cemetery to the south-west all supports a permanent military presence at the site.\textsuperscript{479} The \textit{Geminiacenses} are usually associated with the fort at Liberchies II. Hoffmann suggests that the \textit{Geminiacenses} were raised in the late 4\textsuperscript{th} century, and therefore an earlier unit was garrisoned there.\textsuperscript{480} The coin evidence seems to imply a lapse in occupation after 350 at some point, before a reoccupation at the end of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century. Whatever the precise history of the unit, there is plenty of circumstantial evidence in the artefacts and history of the site to establish that there was a long-term garrison presence here, with interruptions.\textsuperscript{481}

When we put the information into a wider context, these attributions are even clearer. Oudenburg was part of a long-term military zone, as discussed in section 1, which underwent some organizational changes during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century, but remained a \textit{limes} zone. The continual restructuring of space in the south-west corner is interesting, and probably testifies a series of reoccupations, but the bath building and hospital both hint at the continuation of Roman cultural practices that had long been associated with Roman

\textsuperscript{479} J. Mertens, \textit{Oudenburg, Romeinse Legerbasis aan de Noordzeekust} (Brussels, 1973).
\textsuperscript{480} D. Hoffmann, \textit{Das Spätromische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum} (Dusseldorf, 1969), p. 149.
\textsuperscript{481} Though it appears from the coin evidence that the site does seem to have been less intensely occupied in the mid-4\textsuperscript{th} century.
soldiers. Liberchies II was constructed 1400m to the west of Liberchies I (in the previously inhabited vicus). This move may well have been dictated by practical considerations, but also represented a physical separation from the old civilian site. The vicus had largely been abandoned by the mid-3rd century, but one structure emerged during the mid-4th century, a sanctuary, which has been identified as a mithraeum. This could be argued to be associated with the military community at the fort, given the historical association of soldiers with Mithraism, and religion was an important part of military identity. What is odd is that the coin finds on the site peak between 364 and 378, the period with the smallest number of coins in the fort. Then again, given the evidence of decreased settlement patterns in this area during the 4th century, there doesn’t seem to have been a large non-military population around, and if even if they were present, it is very doubtful there were rich enough to leave such large amounts of coinage which are only found in such large numbers at military sites and cities. This, for me, would indicate that this shrine was for a military community. Sadly, no more can be said on the present evidence, but the physical separation of the religious site and the fort does imply the continued separation of the military community from others in the vicinity, though the high level of use at the sanctuary shows a place of possible interaction.

483 R. Brulet, J-P. Dewert and F. Vilvorde, Liberchies V. Vicus Gallo-Romain. Habitat de la Tannerie et Sanctuaire Tardif (Publications d’Histoire de l’Art et d’Archéologie de l’Université Catholique de Louvain, CII) (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2008). The identification, which cannot be certain in the absence of epigraphic evidence, is based on the finds of large numbers of chicken bones and pork. The discovery of almost 1700 coins from the 4th century is paralleled in other Mithraic sites in Gaul and further afield. For coins see L. Severs, Les Monnaies de Liberchies-Bons Villers (Hainaut, Belgique): Quartier Artisanal et Sanctuaire Tardif (1er siècle Avant J.-C. - 4e siècle après J.-C.) (Wetteren, 2011). Parallels can be drawn with the Mithraic sites of Septuil (c.1400 coins) and Martigny (c. 2000 coins) etc. in E. Sauer, The End of Paganism in the North-Western Provinces of the Roman Empire: the Example of the Mithras Cult (Oxford, 1996), p. 22.
484 See M. Spiedel, Mithras Orison: Greek Hero and Roman Army God (Leiden, 1980).
485 R. Brulet and others, op cit. (2008), p. 394
Liberchies I (occupied 250 – 300) was a different establishment.\textsuperscript{486} The surface area covered by the complex was 75.2 \textit{ares} in total, thus more limited than Oudenburg and Liberchies II. It had a series of three defensive ditches, with wooden palisades and ramparts rather than stone. Built in the middle of the \textit{vicus}, which had been largely abandoned during the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, the site would appear to be built in a relative hurry.\textsuperscript{487} There was a large amount of military equipment found in the ditches of the fort.\textsuperscript{488} The specialised nature of equipment (trumpet mouthpiece, tent pegs, ballista bolts; cavalry accoutrements etc.) supports the idea of an occupation by a military unit, but the precise context deposition is uncertain, as the elements were found in the external ditches, and it is unclear why there were placed there. The lack of internal structures makes short-term or temporary occupation seem more probable, an explanation supported by the tent pegs. Parallels can be made morphologically and chronologically with Revelles, further to the south, though there were far fewer military artefacts found. The fort was located 8 miles to the southwest of Amiens, which is found


\textsuperscript{488} The weapons found here (swords, spears, daggers and a ballista projectile) make a military context for this site particularly likely.
alongside the main antique road to Rouen replaced a large funerary monument.\textsuperscript{489} It could be suggested that this represents a local response to the political and economic problems caused by the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century: an ‘unofficial’ construction so to speak.\textsuperscript{490} An important piece of evidence for the identification of the site is the fact that 82\% of the coins are imitations of official coinage. The official debased silver and bronze coinage of the Gallic Empire is concentrated in the Rhineland, which is understandable given the concentration of armed forces there and the political imperatives to pay them.\textsuperscript{491} Local imitation of coinage was carried out in the early 3\textsuperscript{rd} century too, but became more common under Postumus, reaching epidemic portions after the deposition of Tetricius in 274.\textsuperscript{492} This phenomenon appears at other ‘official’ sites in \textit{Belgica} II with evidence for coin moulds that indicates the creation of imitation coinage as opposed to those produced by official dies and specific ‘military’ contexts such as the barracks block at Boulogne.\textsuperscript{493} The parallels between these structures and the square, wood and ditch structures at Liberchies I makes it more logical to identify Revelles as a \textit{burgus} as part of the same programme of construction, which were built for the particular short-term needs in the context of the period 250 onwards: their abandonment does not suggest these were part of a long-term transition.\textsuperscript{494}

\textsuperscript{489} The dating of the site comes from the 641 coins which all carry the effigy of the Gallic Emperors Postumus, Victorinus, Tetricius I and II which implies an occupation date for the years around 270. The site seems to be laid out in an orthogonal shape, estimated to be 70m x 65m, with a v-shaped ditch surrounding a set of internal structures. The entrance is protected by a \textit{titulum} (19m in length), which was where four iron arrowheads were discovered. F. Lemaire, ‘Revelles’, in M. Reddé \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 368 - 9. The current state of knowledge about internal buildings is vague, but there are a series of post-holes which could be huts or possibly extensions to a wall that would permit those inside a better vantage point (a \textit{chemin de ronde} or suchlike).

\textsuperscript{490} This could be as a refuge for the local population, or a means of asserting power by indigenous élites. The majority of fortifications of such a style are found in the Hunsrück-Eifel region rather than Belgica II. R. Brulet, ‘La Militarisation de la Gaule du Nord au Bas-Empire et les Petites Agglomérations Urbaines de Famars et de Bavay’, \textit{Revue du Nord-Archéologie}, 77 (1995), 55-70. The military provenance of the few arrow heads is ambiguous and could be associated with hunting or other activities carried out by a local aristocrat: W. Willems, ‘An Officer or a Gentleman? A Late Roman weapon grave from a Villa at Voerendaal’, in C. Van Driel-Murray, ed., \textit{Roman Military Equipment: the Sources of Evidence} (Oxford, 1989), pp. 143 – 156. The similarities to other structures do not have to be explained by the involvement of military engineers either, as this assumption is based upon a belief that the ‘official’ Roman military had an exclusive capacity to build large structures which is in itself a circular argument, whereby all buildings must be, ‘official,’ as only, ‘official,’ engineers could build them.

\textsuperscript{491} J.F. Drinkwater, \textit{The Gallic Empire: Separatism and Continuity in the North-Western provinces of the Roman Empire}, A.D. 260-274 (Stuttgart, 1987).

\textsuperscript{492} A. Kropff, ‘Late Roman Coin Hoards in the West: Trash or Treasure?’, \textit{Revue Belge de Numismatique et de Sigillographie}, 153 (2007), 73-86.


\textsuperscript{494} This is the view of the excavator F. Lemaire \textit{pers. comm}. The site’s publication is in preparation by INRAP.
Morlanwelz I is probably slightly different in function from Liberchies I in that it is smaller and is credibly identified as a postal station, reinforced by a ditch and wooden palisade. Weapons (mainly spears) have been found here and there are also some crossbow brooches associated with the site, which although the context for these finds is poorly understood, indicates a probable military occupation. Morlanwelz II, was probably occupied during the first half of the 4th century, has several military finds, and probably had some official military function, though what that was is hard to say. The suggestions have included watchtowers, and given its size Givry can probably be attributed a similar function. Such a range of different sites is not surprising, as the Roman authorities had constructed a range of different buildings in the early Empire too, though generally on the Limes rather than provincial interiors. There is no evidence of civilian settlement here, so there is no reason to doubt an ‘official’ function for these sites, although they were occupied for a relatively short period of time.

The key ambiguity lies with reduced urban centres such as Bavay (Bagacum), Famars (Fanum Martis) and Noyon (Noviomagus), and whether their function was primarily a military one. If so it would blur the distinctions with sites like Oudenburg, and imply a widespread military function across most of the province. One can argue that they fulfill several criteria we have already identified: size, fortified walls and the presence of military artefacts (though none of the latter have been found at Noyon). Famars, usually identified with Fanum Martis in the Notitia, is the location of the Praefectus Laetorum Nerviorum which has been argued represents a garrison. Noyon is also associated with the Praefectus laetorum

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495 See table 5 above for references.
496 Bronze cruciform brooch, knife, horse bit, 2 spear heads, 2 ballista bolts and an arrow head.
498 With the fortified forum at Bavay attempts have been made to identify its role during the late Empire both as a fort and a city or to split the site into two distinct zones: one military, the other civilian see E. Will, ‘Recherches sur le Developpment Urbaine sous l’Empire Romain dans la Nord de la Gaule’, Gallia, 20.4 (1962), 79 – 102. There have been suggestions that both Oudenburg and Aardenburg were ‘fortified civilian settlements with military elements’ rather than ‘forts’ per se: see R. Brulet, La Gaule Septentrionale au Bas-Empire (Trier, 1990), p. 118; G. Besuijen, Rodanum: A Study of the Roman Settlement at Aardenburg and Its Metal Finds (Leiden, 2008), pp.80 – 81; for Famars see R. Clotuche, ed., La Ville Antique de Famars (Valenciennes, 2013); B. Desachy, ‘Noyon’, Revue Archéologique de Picardie. Numéro Spécial 16 (1999), 171-177.
499 ND Occ., XLII.37.
However, as we have argued there is no proof that the *laeti* were formal military units, and they were probably communities liable for military service in the countryside which required administration (hence the *praefectus*). Of the artefacts found at Famars, the chain mail and sword certainly have strong military implications, but the context of the mail find is associated with the construction of the *castrum* in the 320s/30s while the sword was found in the 19th century and its context is unknown. The crossbow brooches are also associated with finds from the late 3rd century, and the construction, not later. The lack of information on the interior buildings is a major limitation to advance further discussion. The fortified forum of Bavay has been extensively studied, and there have been many attempts to argue it was a military base. The 11 crossbow *fibulae* are certainly strong indications of an official presence, as is the tombstone of the *scriniarius* from the early 5th century. However, there have been no military artefacts found in the fortified forum itself. The ambiguity comes from the so-called ‘eastern’ *castrum* which does seem to have yielded structures akin to barracks, and ‘Germanic’ pottery, which is dated to the end of the 4th century. The latest assessment is that this is evidence for a military unit being attached to the site at the end of the 4th century, though what is striking is that the *castrum* itself may have continued to remain a defensive civilian settlement, or administrative centre. The maintenance of separation in the articulation of space seems indicative of an attempt to maintain an institutional coherence. In some ways this development brings Bavay into line with developments that are observable in urban sites in *Belgica* II, so it is argued here that Bavay, Famars and Noyon represent sites that could be categorized as ‘fortified urban centres’ but not forts.

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500 *ND. Occ.*, XLII.41.
501 See discussion in chapter 1.
505 *CIL* XIII 395, see discussion in section 1.
3.2.2 The evolution of fortifications

The ‘militarisation’ of Gaul has been presented as a teleological process. The evidence would suggest that the forts in *Belgica* II were subject to quite different chronologies. Table 6 below highlights the different chronological information we possess for the occupation sites on the late Roman period based on material evidence (mainly coins and pottery).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fort</th>
<th>260 - 280</th>
<th>280 - 300</th>
<th>300 - 320</th>
<th>320 - 340</th>
<th>340 - 360</th>
<th>360 - 380</th>
<th>380 - 400</th>
<th>400 - 420</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aardenburg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oudenburg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Givry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morlanwelz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a significant change in the mid-3rd century. Despite some reservations it is very likely that most forts on the Bavay-Tongeren road can be linked to the so-called Gallic Empire (e.g. Givry, Morlanwelz, Liberchies I and Bavay), and the fort at Revelles seems to indicate that the construction of roadside fortifications was a more widespread phenomenon.\(^{508}\)

Alongside these ruptures, Oudenburg provides strong contemporary evidence of continuity. The pottery relating to the occupation of Oudenburg from the period 260 – 280 has been extremely well studied.\(^{509}\) There were large imports of pottery from Britannia in terms of the large amount of samian ware, as well as Black Burnished Ware imports and Black Burnished Ware imitations that were produced in native handmade and wheel-thrown variants, which

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\(^{508}\) One can also include Braives and Taviers in this too, though these lie outside the provincial boundary, and thus outside the scope of this study. Von Petrokovits argues strongly that the beginnings of the changes to fortified structures in the late Roman period has its origins in the 260s, see H. Petrikovits, ‘Fortifications in the North Western Roman Empire from the Third to the Fifth Centuries’, Journal of Roman Studies, 61 (1971), p. 181; Drinkwater is more circumspect arguing that precise dating is impossible this period due to the volatility of the coinage see J. Drinkwater, The Gallic Empire: Separatism and Continuity in the North-Western Provinces of the Roman Empire, A.D.260-274 (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 218 – 224; R. Brulet, La Gaule Septentrionale au Bas Empire. (Trier, 1990), pp. 310 – 312.

indicates that this supply network had been going on for some time, to the extent that it was being emulated in a local context. It would appear that inter-regional trade continued to provide supplies for the fort, as it had in earlier periods.\textsuperscript{510}

Many of the forts in the two zones of\textit{ Belgica} II were subsequently abandoned or refurbished during the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} and early 4\textsuperscript{th} century. Brulet argues this was a programme of “Constantinian” rebuilding, though there are some challenges to this, as there were also programmes of refurbishment and building the second half of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century as well.\textsuperscript{511} There was a striking remodeling of many sites. The ‘fort’ at Aardenburg seems to have fallen out of use during the early 4\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{512} The move from Liberchies I to Liberchies II saw a striking removal. Coinage finds suggest that the occupation of many of these sites was particularly intense between c. AD 330 and c. AD 350.\textsuperscript{513} Morlanwelz II has several military artefacts as well which implies an increased occupation.

Evidence for the fort occupation phases in the last decades of the 4\textsuperscript{th} and the early 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries is sparser than for earlier periods. Several smaller sites (e.g. Givry, Morlanwelz) do not seem to have been occupied after the mid-4\textsuperscript{th} century. Oudenburg provides much of the best evidence for this period. A double well that can be given a\textit{ terminus post quem} of c. 379 – 80 was excavated in the south-west corner of the fort.\textsuperscript{514} Pollen analysis of material from the bottom of the fill suggests that open, grassland dominated vegetation surrounded the well in its period of use probably for raising livestock.\textsuperscript{515} There is evidence in the wild plant record of a transition in the variety of vegetation types indicating the end of the fort’s occupation, but this may not have been until the middle of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{516} There are problems with assessing the pottery remains from the 4\textsuperscript{th} century given the amount of


\textsuperscript{511} Revelles went out of use by the 280s: F. Lemaire, ‘Revelles’, in M. Reddé \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 368 – 369.


\textsuperscript{513} R. Brulet \textit{op. cit.}, (1990), pp. 304 -305.

\textsuperscript{514} This comes from the dating of the felling of the wood used for the internal repairs within the well S. Vanhoutte and others, ‘A Remarkable ‘Double’ Well at the Saxon Shore Fort at Oudenburg (Belgium)’, in Á. Morillo and others, eds., \textit{Limes XX: XX Congreso Internacional de Estudios Sobre la Frontera Romana / XXth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies: 1-3} (2009), p. 1395: it must be added that the precise dating of the well’s construction is extremely problematic given the use of older wood in the outer layer and the youngest ceramics found in the construction pit date to the first half of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century, while there is no ceramic evidence that originates from the construction date of the internal structure causing some confusion.

\textsuperscript{515} S. Vanhoutte and others, \textit{op. cit.}, (2009), p. 1397; the seeds that have been analysed from the well are compatible with animal husbandry (dung heaps, animal fodder) and crafts (oil pressing, textile).

\textsuperscript{516} This is indicated from the ending of the external supply of vegetation and the domination of local plant life.
residual finds, but a large amount of the reduced ware seems to date from the second half of the 4th and early 5th centuries. The bath building may not have ceased use in this period either as it was still standing. There was also a simple timber framed construction, identified as a stable. There is also a marked increase in coin finds at Liberchies in the last phase of occupation which implies some form of reoccupation. This was also the period when one could argue that Bavay had a fort attached to its castrum. Attempting to mark the abandonment is impossible given the poor archaeological data, though the advances in pottery dating, it would appear that the forts were abandoned by the 430s at the latest.

Rather than being a short-term response to the problems of the 3rd century one can argue that the ‘fortification’ of the landscape had long-term origins. Oudenburg’s earliest phase dates back to the 2nd century AD and its occupation across the whole period show the importance of the channel coast as a military zone. The other long-term process was the constant process of abandonment/reoccupation and often radical remodeling of these sites. Evidence from recent excavations has elucidated several phases of occupation across the whole period of study. At Oudenburg five phases of occupation in the fort are now recognized rather than the traditional three. These physical indications of remodeling are supported in other, less well excavated sites by the fluctuation of coin finds. While these are less secure as evidence for architectural remodeling, they do provide a very general context that can complement the patterns observable on the ground, though they make identifying

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518 R. Brulet, ‘Liberchies I’, in R. Brulet and others, eds., Forts Romain de la Route Bavay-Tongres (Louvain, 1995), pp. 43 – 44. The crucial point here is that coin loss reflects coins that are used rather than coins as they are made, and reflects coin supply in the sense that this could vary depending on the proximity of mints, their production output and the ways in which new coins were distributed and diffused into the economy: A. Ravetz, ‘The fourth-century inflation and Romano-British coin finds’, Numismatic Chronicle (1964), 201 – 301.


521 Reports on the original excavations carried out by Mertens elucidated the two wooden forts, followed by the construction of a stone fort e.g. J. Mertens, Het Laat-romeins castellum te Oudenburg Archaeologia Belgica 206 (Brussels, 1978). The first stone fort had a stone building constructed in the same style as the wall which was found in the northern sector in 1977: J. Mertens, ‘Recherches Récentes sur le Limes en Gaule Belge’, in W. Hanson and L. Keppie, eds., Papers Presented to the 12th International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (Oxford, 1979), p. 463. The excavations in the south-west corner reveal a double well, a large oak basin and fences from the second half of the 4th century which replaced a workshop area that dated to the late 3rd century.
complete abandonment as opposed to a minimal occupation very difficult. This can be seen most clearly at Liberchies II where three phases of occupation are suggested, as well as the two at Liberchies I. Such a rapid change warns against failing to appreciate how dynamic the period was, and the amount of integration into the local social networks may have been quite limited.

3.2.3 Function in the province

One role the forts of *Belgica* II could have played was one of ‘policing.’ As has been argued so far, there is often far too stark a distinction drawn between the early and late Empire when it comes to institutions like the army and their deployment, and policing roads was one of the main roles of soldiers in the early Empire. This explanation therefore may well explain one of the functions of the forts on the Bavay-Tongres road, or even at Revelles. As we will see in section 4 though, many of these forts were in areas that seem to have had small populations, or been in areas vulnerable to raids, so the military security role was probably primary. The Abinnaeus archive seems to show how military officers got involved in the community, through policing and gathering tax, but the established village network of Egypt appears to be quite different to *Belgica* II. As will be shown in section 4, some of the forts possibly had local civilian communities growing up in their vicinity, possibly as they provided some security and a market for produce. There is no reason however to assume that forts would simply integrate into local communities. They appear to retained separation in distance and organization. The position of many of these forts, and fortified road centres, on the road networks shows that the authorities were clearly concerned at particular

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522 R. Brulet, ‘Liberchies I’, in R. Brulet and others, eds., *Forts Romains de la Route Bavay-Tongres* (Louvain, 1995), pp. 43 – 44. The crucial point here is that coin loss reflects coins that are used rather than coins as they are made, and reflects coin supply in the sense that this could vary depending on the proximity of mints, their production output and the ways in which new coins were distributed and diffused into the economy: A. Ravetz, ‘The Fourth-Century Inflation and Romano-British Coin Finds’, *Numismatic Chronicle* (1964), 201 – 301.


525 H.I. Bell, *The Abinnaeus Archive: papers of a Roman officer in the reign of Constantine II* (Oxford, 1962), letters 3, 5, 14, 16, 26, 29 and 30 are all related to the collection of the *annona* in some way. No. 15 involves requests for help policing outbreaks of trouble. Several (e.g. 18 and 28) involves Abinnaeus’ soldiers causing trouble in local communities. For Egyptian villages: R. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 110- 147.
periods about their control of the interior. One reason could be to allow the flow of supplies from the *annona militaris*.\(^{526}\) This could explain the role of sites such as Bavay and Famars better than ‘forts’ in the strictest sense. This would be supported by the *scrinarius* at Bavai.\(^{527}\) Burnt remains of grain have been found in the bathhouse at Famars, which may suggest a role before the erection of the fortification.\(^{528}\) Rickman argued there were differences between the *horrea* found in forts and the separate state granaries which served the administrative system which are mentioned in the *Codex Theodosianus*.\(^{529}\) Discussions on the role of the *annona* by archaeologists can be very vague.\(^{530}\) There is currently no evidence of *horrea* in any of the forts. I would speculate that the *annona* has a bigger role in explaining the range of urban wall circuits in the province, rather than the forts, and the finds of crossbow brooches have more to do with these officials displaying their official status, than with soldiers, though many soldiers were undoubtedly in cities on detachment or travelling through.\(^{531}\)

It has been argued that unlike late Roman forts, those from the early Roman period were “semi-independent installations housing their own clerical administration systems and responsible for the repair and storage of their own weapons.”\(^{532}\) This characterisation sees the later period being one of centralised administration and supply: a more bureaucratic system that reflects one of the abiding stereotypes of the period. The pottery relating to the occupation of Oudenburg from the period 260 – 280 already discussed indicates that alongside inter-regional trade providing supplies for the fort, local supply networks were paramount.\(^{533}\) The majority of pottery of use within the fort was from the regionally produced North Menapian Coarse Ware group, of both handmade and wheel-thrown

\(^{526}\) The most cogent explanation is in A.D. Lee, *War in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 85 – 88.

\(^{527}\) See section 1.3.

\(^{528}\) R. Clotuche, *op. cit.*, p. 46.


\(^{530}\) There are some parallels in Gaul to the situation in *Belgica* II, the fortification at Jublains being the most instructive. The recent work there has moved away from an imprecise connection with the collection of the *annona*, to being part of the wider reorganisation of fortifications in the 3rd Century. J. Napoli, ‘Le Complexe Fortifié de Jublains et la Défense du Littoral de la Gaule du Nord’, *Revue du Nord*, 85 (2003), 196 – 217.


The excavations in the south-west corner also reveal that a large number of workshops dominated this area, in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries with evidence for food production and metalwork appearing to extend for quite a long period. The level of waste deposited in the large bowl shaped pit dug in the corner of the fort is particularly impressive in scale. During the last period of occupation in the late 4th and early 5th centuries a double well has provided a range of evidence on the fort’s activities. The fort appears to have remained able to maintain its own food supply through raising cattle as well as manufacture necessities such as shoes, which included women and children. The large amount of animal bones provides the most useful form of evidence for the economic and social analysis of the last garrison. The domestic animal bones show a dominance of cattle, followed by remains of pig and sheep/goats. This combination of remains is consistent with a high status site in the Roman world, indicating the continued economic power of Oudenburg’s fort and the élite status of its inhabitants.

All of this suggests a continued economic vitality and self-sufficiency in the fort during the whole of the late Roman period, with the logistical capacity to maintain regional trade links.

534 The presence of pottery from Britannia has been noted since the 1960s, but the initial finds were too isolated to provide anything more than generalized suggestions whether they represented trade or possibly the movement of people across the channel Y. Hollevoet, ‘Le Site Oudenburg et la Bretagne Insulaire Durant l’Antiquité Tardive: Quelques Items Inédits’, in F. Vermeulen and others, eds., Archaeology in Confrontation: Studies of the Roman Military Presence in the Northwest (Ghent, 2004), pp. 335 – 342. The most comprehensive work has been done derived from a dumping pit.

535 Recent excavations have counted nearly 20 open fires which were covered by a series of wooden constructions during this period. Several of the fires revealed at least 2 levels of use and one revealed 7 layers. There was evidence for the production of simple brooches at the fort, and a burnt layer of 30m² contained c. 550 coins, most of which are imitations of Tetricius II: S. Vanhoutte, ‘The Saxon Shore Fort at Oudenburg (Belgium): New Excavation Results,’ in Á. Morillo and others, eds., Limes XX: XX Congreso Internacional de Estudios Sobre la Frantera Romana / XXth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies: 1-3 (2009), pp. 1387 – 88.

536 These finds include pottery sherds, animal bones, iron and bronze pieces, leather shoes, a few wooden bowls and many other items “The significant indicators here are the enormous number of finds, their variety and the location in the corner of the fort.” S. Vanhoutte ibid., p. 1388.

537 This comes from the dating of the felling of the wood used for the internal repairs within the well S. Vanhoutte and others, ‘A Remarkable ‘Double’ Well at the Saxon Shore Fort at Oudenburg (Belgium)’, in Á. Morillo and others, eds., op. cit., p. 1395. It must be added that the precise dating of the well’s construction is extremely problematic given the use of older wood in the outer layer and the youngest ceramics found in the construction pit date to the first half of the 4th century, while there is no ceramic evidence that originates from the construction date of the internal structure causing some confusion.

538 S. Vanhoutte, ‘The Saxon Shore Fort at Oudenburg (Belgium): New Excavation Results,’ in Á. Morillo and others, ibid., p. 1390; there is of course nothing especially unusual or particularly “late Roman” about the discovery of shoes for men, women and children in fort contexts. The well preserved shoe corpus for Vindolanda demonstrates that this was the case throughout the period of occupation see C. Van Driel Murray, ‘Vindolanda and the Dating of Roman Footwear’, Britannia, 32 (2001), 185-197.

and impressive levels of local production. While this must have involved significant links with the civilian population, the maintenance of specialised craftsmen implies the retention of a closed community within the fort. This certainly suggests that the rather negative assessment of the internal vitality of Late Roman forts, and their reliance on “centralised” command and administration is not applicable during the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, which it has been in terms of the innovate style of stone fortifications in this period.\textsuperscript{540}

3.2.4 A persistent military identity?

While there were a variety of different types of fortified site in Belgica II during the 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries, it seems likely that we can still talk of the existence of forts as locations of distinct military communities in the period. Both Oudenburg and Liberchies II have strong indications of long-term occupation by garrisons and there is no positive evidence of a continued civilian occupation at either of these sites, outside of those who made up part of the wider military community, and so it would suggest that a distinct separation was maintained during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century. The early 5\textsuperscript{th} century is harder to understand, but there is no reason why there should have been such a clean break. The late Roman period was one of enormous complexity, and variety, and in one sense it is quite different from previous periods. On the other hand there are important continuities from the earlier periods too, and these overlapping continuities and transformations are a particular feature which makes the period from the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} to the early 5\textsuperscript{th} century quite distinct. The disappearance of forts does seem to have been one of conscious abandonment, which implies that the 5\textsuperscript{th} century developed a different environment in Belgica II.

Section 3: Soldiers and cities in Belgica II\textsuperscript{541}

3.3.1 Defining “cities” in late Roman Belgica II

As we have already discussed in the previous section, differentiating a ‘castrum’ from a ‘castellum’ is not straightforward in the late Roman period. However rather than attributing


\textsuperscript{541} See Appendix 2 for full survey of sites mentioned in the text.
a clearly defined military role to every fortified structure, it is still possible to identify traditional forts in some parts of the province, and these should make us be cautious attributing military functions to sites without a range of contextual evidence. There are several categories of urban site in Belgica II to investigate as a means of assessing how far they continued to exist as cities, and to what extent they merely served military purposes. The most obvious category is of the civitas capitals listed in the Notitia Galliarum. While it was undoubtedly adjusted in subsequent centuries for ecclesiastical purposes, the document probably has its origins as a secular list of provinces in the late 4th century.\(^{542}\) There were several reorganisations in the late Empire, such as the transferring of civitas capital status from one centre to another e.g. from Cassel to Tournai; St. Quentin to Vermand; Bavay to Cambrai, which can be seen in table 7 below.\(^{543}\)

**Table 7 Civitas Capitals in Belgica II: a) cities replaced b) names as civitas capitals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Modern Location (Dept.)</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.a) Tournai</td>
<td>Belgium (Hainaut)</td>
<td>Civitas Turnacensium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.b) Cassel</td>
<td>France (Nord)</td>
<td>Castellum Menapiorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.a) Vermand</td>
<td>France (Aisne)</td>
<td>Civitas Vermanduensium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.b) St. Quentin</td>
<td>France (Aisne)</td>
<td>?No name known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Soissons</td>
<td>France (Aisne)</td>
<td>Civitas Susessionororum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reims</td>
<td>France (Champagne-Ardennes)</td>
<td>Metropolis Civitas Remorum (Provincial capital)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Châlons-sur-Marne</td>
<td>France (Champagne-Ardennes)</td>
<td>Civitas Catuellaunorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.a) Cambrai</td>
<td>France (Nord)</td>
<td>Civitas Camarcensium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{542}\) For a strong case against the document being ecclesiastical in origin, and that the list was compiled by Magnus Maximus’ administration, see J. Harries, ‘Church and State in the Notitia Galliarum’, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 68 (1978), 26-43 contra A. Rivet, ‘The Notitia Galliarum: Some Questions’, in J.C. Mann, R. Goodburn and P. Bartholomew, eds., *op. cit.*, (1976), pp. 119 – 142, who argues the list is ecclesiastical in origin though using secular sources.

This list can only suggest a framework of administration, but the fluid situation implied by the changes in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century suggests that this also reflects a varied urban network. Also in the settlement hierarchy are a series of secondary settlements, identified in francophone literature as \textit{agglomerations secondaires} that vary widely in nature and scale. As we have already discussed in the previous chapter, many of these resembled forts in the size of their fortified castrum, but sites like Famars, Bavay and Noyon are best seen as retaining some urban functions.

### 3.3.2 Dating

The view that urban wall circuits of \textit{Belgica II} were constructed primarily for defensive purposes and serving military needs means they could be read as an index of the ‘militarisation’ of northern Gaul. This is not straightforward. A recent statement in support of ‘defence’ asserts the view as axiomatic, and indicates how easily this view can become an \textit{a priori} view.\textsuperscript{547} Fundamental to the argument is chronology. If the walls were a direct response to the invasions and insecurity of the second half of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, and built in the last decades of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, then the argument would be a perfectly logical

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\textsuperscript{544} Boulogne is not mentioned in the \textit{Notitia Galliarum} which probably reflects the fact that the city wasn’t the seat of a bishop in the Middle Ages but it was raised to the status of the civitas capital in the Late Empire.

\textsuperscript{545} Details of all sites mentioned in the text are in Appendix 3.


deduction. Until recently the sparse dating material, such as coins found in the foundation trenches at Soissons, Arras and Beauvais, for example, has also generally supported the defence line. But coins are not a precise chronological tool, only providing a terminus post quem which could be decades before the wall was actually built given that coins remained in circulation for a considerable period of time after their minting. As has been argued above the “barbarian invasions” are not a sufficient explanation for the various changes that occur during the late 3rd and early 4th centuries. Subsequently, a simple connection between perceived insecurity and a defensive mentalité is not sufficient.

The most recent archaeological research on the walls of Belgica II indicates that the urban wall circuits were erected at different times over a period of as many as 100 years, from the late 3rd to the late 4th centuries. The circuit wall at Amiens is now dated to the mid-4th century on the basis of dendrochronological analysis of wooden posts that were used to construct the foundation layer at rue St Germain, which would give a terminus post quem of 351. While there are some doubts about the precision of these dates, the general view

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548 This view is still commonly held by researchers particularly, but not exclusively, archaeologists. For the cities of Belgica II see the various summaries of late Roman cities in the review of urban archaeology published in 1999 e.g. D. Roussel, ‘Soissons’, Revue Archéologique de Picardie. Numéro Spécial, 16 (1999), 129 – 137; D. Bayard, ‘Les Villes du Nord de la Gaule en l’Antiquité Tardive’, in D. Bayard, J-L. Collart and N. Mahéo, eds., La Marque de Rome: Samarobriva et les Villes du Nord de la Gaule (Amiens, 2006), pp. 172 – 175; S. Johnson, Late Roman Fortifications (London, 1983), p. 113, argues for a late 3rd century date for construction. This view is essentially built on the literary sources recording the “3rd century crisis.” The view of destruction followed by imperially organised reconstruction is found in the written sources particularly for Probus who was apparently responsible for the restoration of 60 Gallic cities according to the Historia Augusta (Vita Probi 13.5 – 8) which can be understood as evidence for their reconstruction with new walls. Eutropius, Breviarum, 9.17 and Aurelius Victor, De Caesariibis, 37 both record other traditions (from the same source given they report similar details, though there is some variation) on Probus’s work revitalising Gallic agriculture. Then again this was probably a literary topos assigned to “good” emperors as it can be seen being used for Julian while he was Caesar in Gaul, and Valentinian to some extent.

549 Only the coins securely provenance from foundation trenches underneath walls can be used for this purpose, as sometimes coins associated with side trenches which could be the product of later repairs have been used for dating see J. Wacher, ‘Some Thoughts on Roman Urban Defences in the West’, in J. Maloney and B. Hobley, Roman Urban Defences in the West (Oxford, 1983), p. 142. Coin dating has been controversially used to provide precise chronologies for historical events like the movements of Frankish raiders in northern Gaul in the 270s when they cannot actually be trusted to give such accurate information: see R. Delmaire ‘Les Enfouissements Monetaires, Temoignages d’Insecurité?’, Revue du Nord-Archéologie, 77 (1995), 21 – 26. See the dating evidence in appendix 2.

550 This is based on the dendrochronological dating outlined in L. Wozny, ‘Amiens, Saint-Germain, zone 1-zone 2 (80.021.017 AH), DFS de Fouille de Sauvetage, Amiens’, SRA Picardie (1996) on excavations at l’îlot Saint-Germain. “Trente-trois pieux ont été débités pendant l’hiver 340 et le printemps 341 et un pieu a été fabriqué dix ans plus tard.” For acceptance of this date see B. Pichon, Amiens: Carte archéologique de la Gaule (Paris, 2009), p. 72. This of course strongly challenges the traditional dating of Amiens’ late Roman walls which were based on the coins found in earlier excavations and dating to the late 3rd century. See also F. Vasselle, ‘L’Enceinte Urbaine du Bas-Empire de Samarobriva (Amiens, Somme). Description - Construction – Datation,’ Celticum, 6 (1963), 323-342.
that this indicates a mid-4th century construction date has not been challenged.\footnote{552} An argument against this new dating is the famous story of St. Martin donating his military cloak to a beggar at Amiens, which has been dated to 335 on the grounds that Sulpicius was manipulating the chronology of Martin’s career to bring him into conflict with the ‘pagan emperor’ Julian, thus serving Sulpicius’ hagiographical purposes.\footnote{553} However, such quibbling over details puts too much weight on a source that is fundamentally unreliable for factual details on Gallic cities in the 350s. One can argue the story occurred in the 350s, which would fall into line with Sulpicius’ own chronology or accept that Sulpicius was presenting the story to meet his understanding of what Amiens looked like when he was writing at the end of the 4th century (if he actually knew). There is further support for a mid-4th century date in the context from the dating of the enceinte at Reims, which was probably the product of the second quarter of Constantine’s reign or that of his sons: a fairly secure, earliest possible, construction date is the 330s based on coins from the 320s that were found in the foundation trench below the wall.\footnote{554}

Dating other city wall circuits is more difficult. Beauvais’ walls can be dated to the early 4th century at the earliest based on the coin evidence, which again provides scope for a later

\footnote{552} The tree ring chronologies for the 4th century are not yet as precise as they are for other centuries so some researchers give a note of caution when describing this material e.g. B. Pichon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 72. As a \textit{terminus post quem} however, as one can infer that the wood being cut would have been done so deliberately for the purpose it seems far more precise than other forms of dating such as coins and pottery. For the techniques of dendrochronology and its efficacy see M.G.L. Baillie, \textit{A Slice Through Time: Dendrochronology and Precision Dating} (London, 1995). The use of more accurate dating than coins and pottery, which can only provide a \textit{terminus post quem}, can be seen at Paris where carbon dating has been used to place the erection of the walls between 308 and 360, D. Busson, \textit{Paris: Carte Archéologique de la Gaule} (Paris, 1998), p. 76. Other examples can be found in the eastern half of the empire where W. Cherf, ‘Carbon-14 Chronology for the Late Roman Fortifications of the Thermopylae Frontier’, \textit{Journal of Roman Archaeology}, 5 (1992), 261-64, which re-dates walls traditionally dated to Justinian’s reign on the basis of Procopius’ \textit{Buildings} to the reign of Theodosius II to the first half of the 5th century.

\footnote{553} T. Barnes, ‘The Military Career of Martin of Tours’, \textit{Analecta Bollandiana}, 114 (1996), 25-32, argues strongly that Sulpicius’ account of Martin’s military career in \textit{Vita Sancti Martini} II.2-8 is deeply flawed as its stresses the short time Martin spent in the army (2 years) when he would have joined in the 330s and thus have left before Julian’s accession. One could accept that Martin actually served for the full 20 years and the whole section on his removal was entirely fabricated. The problem of co-ordinating written sources with material remains is a long standing issue and can also be seen with the story of Constantius being lifted over a wall at Langres in Eutropius \textit{Breviarum} 9.23 during the 290s. There is no evidence that Langres had a wall at that date. It has been proposed that this is a manuscript error and Eutropius mean Windisch which seems to have had a fortified wall in the 290s and was in an area where Constantius campaigned: E. Frézouls, \textit{Les Villes Antiques de la France Vol. 2: Germanie Superieure} (Paris, 1984), p. 410. The whole exercise of attempting to link anecdotes to physical evidence on the ground involves the accumulation of so many imponderables, it is essentially futile.\footnote{554} R. Chossenot, A. Estéban and R. Neiss, \textit{Reims: Carte Archéologique de la Gaule} (Paris, 2010), p. 94.
construction. Similarities in construction techniques used at Beauvais with those at Soissons and Senlis have led to the assumption that they were constructed contemporaneously, but this line of argument is circumstantial and not conclusive. Another issue that complicates attempts to assess construction dates is that these walls required a considerable amount of work and would have taken a long time to build, and dating information often comes from only small sections of the overall circuit. Although the walls reused spolia in the foundations of all (excavated) stone constructed walls in Belgica II this does not necessarily mean building was rushed. In fact the common standards that each wall seems to have attained are impressive and indicate considerable thought being put into their execution. The walls of secondary urban establishments provide some further insight into overall patterns in the province. Traditionally most of these wall circuits were dated to the late 3rd century on the same reasoning as outlined above, e.g. at Noyon (Noviomagus). However, in the far east of the province, the dendrochronology at Mouzon, based on wooden posts found in the wall foundations excavated in 1992 gives a terminus post quem of 368/9. Research on the walled forum at Bavai is much better understood than most sites, and this shows a series of developments of the site. The first fortification wall raised around the forum in the 260s/70s was subsequently developed with a ditch, which was then followed by a remodeled wall sans ditch in the early 4th century which is the final phase that be seen now with the facing of petit appareil and narrow red brick courses. While excavations have been less effective at Famars in elucidating the

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557 S. Esmonde-Cleary, op. cit., (2013), p. 65; B. Bachrach, ‘The Fortification of Gaul and the Economy of the Third and Fourth Centuries’, Journal of Late Antiquity, 3 (2010), p. 60, argues that urban wall circuits in Gaul would have taken an average of 20 million man hours. A comparison can be made with the Edward I’s castle building programme in North Wales which was completed over a period of 30 years. Intense activity led to the walls being constructed Rhuddlan (5 years), Beaumaris (built over 35 years), Flint (7 years), Conway (6 years), Caernarfon (built over 46 years and never completed): see D. Williams and J. Kenyon, The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales (Oxford, 2010).  
precise chronology of changes, there were several re-modeling phases during its evolution.\textsuperscript{561}

There still remain crucial obstacles to elucidating precise chronologies for the construction of the urban wall circuits of Belgica II, and in the absence of secure dating any interpretation can only be hypothetical. That the best dating information comes from small sections of the overall circuit means that it is difficult to distinguish between a short or long construction. Nevertheless it seems we should see the walls as an evolving structure that developed over decades. This should be no surprise given the enormous economic cost of wall construction. This would also bring Belgica II into line with the evidence from across Gaul where city walls were erected across the 4\textsuperscript{th} and into the early 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries, probably reflecting local conditions and resources.\textsuperscript{562} If this is the case, a simple factor seems insufficient to explain their appearance, and the arguments for their symbolic power seem relatively stronger than a reflex action to the military troubles of the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} century.\textsuperscript{563}

\subsection*{3.3.3 Regional patterns}

Another means of assessing the context of construction is by comparing their stylistic and functional similarities. Most castra that have been excavated show some common features. Foundations were created by using large reused sculpted blocks, often funerary monuments, which were placed on top of each other creating a width of anything between 3 and 5m.\textsuperscript{564} A trench was then dug in which wooden posts (usually 1.5m x 0.15m) were put before impacted stone was placed on top. Opus signium (crushed tile mortar) was then applied with neat rows of petit appareil (small, orthogonal, dressed stones) that faced a compacted concrete rubble core, bonded every 2 metres or so with courses of red brick.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{562} For example coins found in foundation trenches at Tours give a post terminus quem of the 370s for the wall circuit see J. Wood, Recherches sur Tours 2 (Tours, 1983), 11 - 60; the dating of St. Bertrand-de-Comminges in Novempopulae is now dated to the start of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century; see S. Esmonde Cleary, M. Jones and J. Wood, ‘The Late Roman Defences at Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges (Haute Garonne)’, Journal of Roman Archaeology, 11 (1998), 343 – 354.
\item \textsuperscript{563} Thus contra E. M.Wightman, op. cit., p. 223 who attributes the initiative to Probus with a timelag for completion.
\item \textsuperscript{564} Spolia can be found in all the walls at Amiens, Beauvais, Soissons, Senlis and Reims that have been excavated – see the assembled evidence and references in appendix 2.
\end{itemize}
Many of the walls also had external projecting towers, often in quite large numbers. These common forms are striking and form of the basis of Johnson’s argument that the walls were a product of a regional policy of construction, and thus as part of imperial policy, by groups working under military supervision. He also argues that the square corner towers at Beauvais and Soissons are unique in the western provinces, underlining the provincial ‘style’.

Johnson’s argument is unsatisfactory. While the walls at Beauvais, Amiens and Soissons all followed an orthogonal plan, the walls at Reims and Senlis were constructed in an oval shape. The walls at Reims appear to incorporate the early imperial triumphal arches as entrance ways while maintaining many of their decorative features, which implies a monumental aesthetic. The different areas enclosed by the urban walls circuits of Belgica II would suggest that construction was shaped by local geographical and social demands: the relatively large size of Reims’ wall reflected the continued political importance of the city as a provincial capital. Amiens incorporated its amphitheatre into its walls while other cities did not. Senlis also has polychrome decorative features in its walls that are paralleled with walls in western Gaul such as Le Mans. The information on the wall circuit at Vermand for example is limited, but it seems that the city used a pre-existing La Tène era earthwork as a circuit wall during the 4th century. At Châlons-sur-Marne it is possible that the late Roman wall was a turf construction. What settlement there was at Cassel seems to have concentrated on the summit of high ground. Johnson’s arguments for an imperially organised campaign of construction in the late 3rd century are based on a

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565 Projecting towers have been found at Beauvais, Soissons, Senlis, Arras, Tournai, Famars and Bavay. They probably existed at other city walls too, but the poor level of preservation has meant it is impossible to assess.
567 S. Johnson, ibid., p. 97.
568 R. Chossenot, A. Estéban and R. Neiss, Reims: Carte Archéologique de la Gaule (Paris, 2010),
571 This does seem a bit odd given that Vermand replaced St Quentin as civitas capital and one would expect this would have led to the construction of a new wall circuit. The possibility that there wasn’t such a circuit perhaps underlines how far local considerations were responsible. B. Pichon, l’Aisne: Carte Archéologique de la Gaule (Paris, 2004), pp. 477 – 504.
circularity of argument and he tends to lump well understood examples in together with less clear sites to make his point.\textsuperscript{574} That there should be similarities is no surprise: some Roman construction practices were common to the whole empire.\textsuperscript{575}

Dey argues for the identification of a group of walls in western Gaul as a ‘decorated cluster’ which he attributes represents a co-ordinated imperial initiative by the Tetrarchic emperors, building on the work of their immediate predecessors, and representing a deliberate statement of imperial power and legitimacy in the context of the political troubles of the late 3rd century.\textsuperscript{576} Dey’s dating evidence is problematic to say the least, which undermines his specific argument on the chronology of construction.\textsuperscript{577} This does not undermine his basic argument that city walls have a crucial place in Tetrarchic and Constantine ideology as a statement of the resurgence of imperial power in the aftermath of the usurpations and chaos of the preceding decades, and may have had an associative role with the ceremony of \textit{adventus}.\textsuperscript{578} The aforementioned gates at Reims would have complements this view and the dating places it neatly into a developed Constantinian framework.\textsuperscript{579} The depiction of walls identified with London on the Arras medallion minted in 310 would appear to illustrate how this had become a \textit{leitmotif} of imperial propaganda.\textsuperscript{580}


\textsuperscript{575} That is not to say that the whole of the Roman world used exactly the same techniques, all of the time, but one can find similar walls to those in \textit{Belgica} II across much of the western Roman world, and even in the east. The walls of Constantinople built in the early 5th century bear some similarities to the walls in the west even though their context of construction is quite different. This should be no surprise given the important symbolism of the Aurelian Walls at Rome.

\textsuperscript{576} Only Senlis from \textit{Belgica} II is amongst this group. H. Dey, ‘Art, Ceremony, and City Walls: The Aesthetics of Imperial Resurgence in the Late Roman West’, \textit{Journal of Late Antiquity}, 3.1 (2010), 3-37.

\textsuperscript{577} See Dey \textit{op. cit.}, 17 – 18 n. 40 for his discussion of the dating material which provides a series of \textit{termini post quem} based on coins and milestones, which while of 3rd century date, are not reliable indicators of precise chronology as we have argued already. Only the evidence of Le Mans actually best fits his dating patterns of 275 – 300, due to the archaeomagnetic analysis of bricks which date to 280. Dey argues that these bricks would have been fired when the wall was being constructed, but there is no way of proving this, and archaeomagnetic dating is not as reliable as Dey suggests it is, as it provides a range of dates rather than a precise one. C. Batt, ‘Where to Draw the Line? The Calibration of Archaeomagnetic Dates’, \textit{Physics and Chemistry of the Earth} 23.9 (1998), 994, points out that dates before AD 600 are hard to calibrate with any accuracy, while the other evidence relies on \textit{terminus post quem} of coins which as we have argued are rather too unreliable to have much weight placed on them. For Senlis see M. Durand, ‘Des Vestiges Gallo-Romains dans une Cave Post-Medievale a Senlis (Oise)’, \textit{Revue Archéologique de Picardie}, 3/4 (1993), 121–129.

\textsuperscript{578} S. MacCormack. \textit{Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity} (Ann Arbor, 1981), pp. 17 – 61.

\textsuperscript{579} If this did exist it would have most likely been a development of earlier imperial policy.

The range and complexity of wall circuits in *Belgica* II implies a complex range of local and central initiatives, which cannot be easily reduced to one specific set of events. Most recent studies stress the reactive nature of late Roman government and so a centralised building programme could have covered the whole of *Belgica* II in a space of a few decades seems inherently improbable. Late Roman government was still capable of impressive feats of organization and could mobilise huge resources, but the scale of the changes would suggest a more complex interaction of local, regional and imperial authorities.

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3.3.4 Cities or citadels?

The question remains how far the urban sites of Belgica II merely served the needs of the military and imperial administration, and whether a civic urban culture persisted into the 4th century. Some archaeologists argue that “these reduced fortifications that are called castrum (pl. castra) were populated with soldiers and military production facilities and arsenals.”

It can appear that these shrinking cities marked the ending of the monumental municipal culture of the early empire and the curial culture went with it. The increase in positions available in the imperial bureaucracy meant there was an alternative path for social advancement which required investment in literary culture and education rather than localised euergetism. Estimates on the population of the cities are pure guesswork, but it is not difficult to argue for hundreds rather than thousands living within the wall circuits.

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587 S. Esmonde-Cleary, op. cit., (2013), pp. 75 – 76 argues that the new wall urban sites were all part of the creation of a new ‘official’ society that was deeply militarized.


585 Both E. M.Wightman, op. cit., pp. 230 – 231 and J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, Decline and fall of the Roman City (Oxford, 2001), pp. 84 – 85, use 100 – 200 people per hectare as a rough guess. Liebeschuetz uses the legionary camp (300/ha) as a rough model, while Wightman uses 18th century censuses based on the
The apparent monopolisation of the state in production terms seems clear from the *Notitia*, and this had a big impact on the *civitates* of *Belgica* II (see table 8 below):

**Table 8 fabricae recorded in Notitia Dignitatum based in Belgica II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civitas</th>
<th>Fabricae</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ambianensium</strong></td>
<td><em>Notitia Dignitatum Occ. IX.39</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Amiens)</td>
<td><em>Ambianensis spatharia et scutaria</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At Amiens Swords and shields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remorum</strong> (Reims)</td>
<td><em>Notitia Dignitatum Occ. IX.36</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remensis spatharia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At Reims swords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Notitia Dignitatum Occ. XI.34</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Praepositus thesaurorum Remorum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Praepositus of the treasury at Reims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Notitia Dignitatum Occ. XI.56</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Procurator gynaecii Remensis, Belgicae Secundae</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The procurator of the weaving-house at Reims in <em>Belgica Secunda</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Notitia Dignitatum Occ. XI.76</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Praepositus branbariciarorum sive argentariae Remensium</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Praepositus of the gold and silver weavers at Reims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tungracensium</strong></td>
<td><em>Notitia Dignitatum Occ.XI.57</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tournai)</td>
<td><em>Procurator gynaecii Tornacensis, Belgicae Secundae</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The procurator of the weaving-house at Tournai <em>Belgica secunda</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suessionum</strong> (Soissons)</td>
<td><em>Notitia Dignitatum Occ. IX.35</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

occupation of castra. These figures are probably too high, though there is always the possibility that buildings had more than one storey.
This would support the idea that cities were entirely driven by state investment, aimed at serving military needs. The usual explanation for the growth of these production centres is the increase in the number of soldiers, especially in provinces of the interior, and the move to an *annona* system based on taxes in kind in the face of the monetary problems facing the empire in the late 3rd century.\(^{586}\) One could argue that the production of arms in cities marks a break from the earlier period, when many *fabricae* that have been found were associated with forts, but this is inaccurate, as several arms manufacturers have been found in provincial Gaul from the early imperial period.\(^{587}\) Such an assessment, which is closely associated with Vegetius’ antiquarian concepts of the Roman army being autarchic, is false.\(^{588}\) The discussion in section 2 shows that, where excavation has been carried out, forts produced their own materials or sourced locally, though the proportions are difficult to assess on current evidence.\(^{589}\)

James argues for a Tetrarchic dating for the *fabricae*.\(^{590}\) This is based on rather circular reasoning, and while undoubtedly some establishments contextually suit these emperors’ policies, this isn’t sufficient. There is some evidence for a reorganisation of the *forum* at Amiens in the mid-4th century, which saw the removal of buildings identified as a warehouse, and an erection of a building that was used for metalwork, which has been


\(^{587}\) There is plenty of evidence of *fabricae* associated with Roman forts, especially in Britain at forts like Inchtuthil Chester or Housesteads, e.g. E. Shirley, *The Construction of the Roman Legionary Fortress at Inchtuthil* (Oxford, 2000), p. 115. But a considerable body of evidence also exists for weapons being manufactured for Roman soldiers across the provinces, often close to where supplies of iron were to be found, or at major centres of imperial administration e.g. at Monceaux-le-Comte in Burgundy where armour was being made on detachment from a legion at the *vicus* in the 2nd century. For further examples and discussion see P. Cosme, Les *Fournitures d’Armes aux Soldats Romains*’ in L. de Blois, E. Lo Cascio, O. Hekster and G. de Kleijn, eds., *The Impact of the Roman Army (200 BC-AD 476) : Economic, Social, Political, Religious and Cultural Aspects: Proceedings of the Sixth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, 200 B.C.-A.D. 476), Capri, March 29-April 2, 2005* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 252 – 256.

\(^{588}\) Vegetius, *Epitome*, II.11 (when discussing the Prefect of Engineers) “*Habebant etiam fabricas scutarias locarias arcuarias, in quibus sagittae cassides missibilia omniaque armorum genera formabantur*” (They also used to have workshops for shields, armour and bows in which arrows, missiles and all types of arms were made).

\(^{589}\) See section 2.3 above.

identified as the *fabrica*. The *Notitia* also implies that Amiens may have been a later addition to an earlier list, implying a later date of construction. Such activity is not unknown in Roman urban contexts in the 4th century, such as the large scale evidence of metal working in the theatre at Argentomagus in Aquitaine. In Britain these activities are also well known, and there are no recorded *fabricae* in Britain, so making direct links to official state activity is at best problematic, though it is possible that they are *lacunae* in the *Notitia*. The latest assessment of evidence for artisan workshops and activity in *Belgica* II shows a low level of workshop production in the *civitas* capitals. One solution could be that the *procuratores* were ‘supervisors’ who managed a series of state run workshops across the province in the countryside, but there is no evidence for this at the moment.

Due to the lack of excavation on the late Roman levels, resulting from continued occupation of *castrum* sites, explanatory models have a weak evidential basis. There has hardly been any excavation on the *castra* at Cambrai, Vermand, Soissons and Senlis. There is concrete evidence for dislocation, with many structures from earlier periods going out of use e.g. baths, though this is not universal, with Reims gaining imperial help from Constantine in the maintenance of its structure. Although Reims’ *castrum* only covered 25% of its early imperial predecessor, there are numerous testimonies to its wealth in terms of artefacts. Alongside its bath house, there is evidence that the aqueduct was still in use until the late

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592 Amiens is listed last when it should be first given the rest of the *fabricae* are listed from west to east: S. James, *op. cit.*, p. 266.
594 Many sites in Roman Britain for example have evidence of metalworking in public buildings during the 4th century. 9 forum-basilica complexes have revealed evidence as well as 3 bathhouses and a couple of temples. Many of these tend to show evidence for metal recycling and smithery rather than smelting, though a high degree of skill is required for this see A. Rogers, *Late Roman Towns in Britain: Rethinking Change and Decline* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 130 – 148. Rogers argues strongly against the ‘militarising’ principle as being unproven. S. James, *op. cit.*, p. 258, points out that several Illyrian factories lack specific products, which he argues is a loss in transmission.
596 This idea was first suggested by J. P. Wild, *Textile Manufacture in the Northern Roman Provinces* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 51- 52, who suggested that the *gynaecii* were merely administrative and collection points that delegated the production to local cottage industries. This was subsequently followed by A. Ferdière, ‘La Distance Critique: Artisans et Artisanat dans l’Antiquité Romaine et en Particulier en Gaule’, *Les Petits Cahiers d’Anatole* (2001), p. 20.
597 See Appendix 2 for full details and references.
598 *CIL* XIII 3255.
4th century, presumably providing the necessary water. There is evidence of continued urban life in some form around these castra. Several sites have evidence of continued building occupation to a high standard e.g. hypocausts. There is also evidence to suggest internal reorganisation and rebuilding throughout the period, as for example at Tournai. The city walls were not the limits on settlement. Bavay, which has been described as a ‘military outpost,’ has large amounts of coins and pottery finds inside and outside the castrum until the Valentinianic period. While there were certainly important transitions occurring in urban and how their populations functioned within them, a complete rupture with the past at the end of the 3rd century is not completely tenable.

When the urban processes are put into a long-term perspective they are more impressive. For some sites such as Mouzon, Tournai and Cambrai the late Roman period were times of great prosperity, a process that continued well into the Merovingian period while sites such as Bavay, Cassel and St. Quentin all dwindled. Many urban sites were already struggling at the end of the 2nd century, and large sections had been largely abandoned long before their buildings were dismantled and used to construct the walls (e.g. Bavay, Amiens etc.). Describing continued activity in cities is much simpler than explaining it. One approach would be to argue that these represent the continued existence of curiales, though this is an argument ex silentio. Salvian complains about the existence of curiales who taxed the poor, but he was probably referring to the Trier region. The Codex Theodosianus shows that curiales were made responsible for walls. Other demands included the need to bring levies

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600 These have been found at Bavay, Beauvais, Tournai (possibly as part of a bath house) and Noyon.
604 For Tournai’s prosperity in late antiquity see R. Brulet, ‘Tournai, Capitale du Bas-Empire et Évolution au Haut Moyen-Âge’, R. Anaert, ed., The Very Beginning of Europe? Early-Medieval Migration and Colonisation (Brussels, 2012), pp. 125-134. For St Quentin the only material evidence of 4th century occupation is a coin of Licinius, see J-L. Collart, ‘Saint-Quentin’, Revue Archéologique de Picardie. Numéro Spécial 16 (1999), 67-128; for Cassel see F. Loridont, ‘Cassel – Castellum Menapiorum’ in D. Bayard, J-L. Collart and N. Mahéo, eds., op. cit., p. 49; Bavay’s reduction to a small core around the forum is well known, though large numbers of finds in the second half of the 3rd century show that the areas extra muros were not abandoned straight away, see R. Delmaire, J-C. Carmezeix, F. Loridant and C. Louvion, Le Nord, Bavay: Carte Archéologique de la Gaule (Paris, 2011), p. 94.
605 Salvian, De Gub. Dei, 5.18; an inscription to a senior curial figure Apronius principales attested in RICG I no. 104 which dates to the 5th century would indicate the survival of municipal government in Trier.
of materials e.g. timber and ash, for use in the *fabricae*, which while it applies to Italy and Raetia, could also have theoretically applied to the élite of *Belgica* II.\(^606\) The system seems to have been predicated on sufficient resources in the countryside to work. The only example we have of urban patronage is the Magister Equitum Jovinus who gave money towards a church in 370.\(^607\) The ecclesiastical hierarchy of the 5\(^{th}\) century like Remigius, and shadowy families like the *Syagrii* connected to Soissons, all suggest that élite families did exist and maintain some form of urban structure. However they may all have had their origins as *honorati* serving the emperor, like the owner of the hoard at Beaurains.\(^608\)

### 3.3.5 Garrisons

The strongest form of evidence for the military purpose of cities would be the existence of permanent garrisons in the cities. Figures 3 to 5 below provide data supporting the association of garrisons with cities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amiens</td>
<td><em>Equites catafractarii Ambianenses</em></td>
<td><em>ND Or. VI.36</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Numerus catafractarii</em></td>
<td><em>CIL XIII 3493 &amp; 3495</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Numerus Ursariensies</em></td>
<td><em>CIL XIII 3492</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Scola Provincialis</em></td>
<td><em>CIL XIII 3494</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arras</td>
<td><em>Laeti Batavi</em></td>
<td><em>ND Occ. XLII.40</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Germanic” sanctuary?(^609)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{606}\) *Cod. Th.* 11.16.15 (Raetia, 388); 11.16.18 (Milan, 390).

\(^{607}\) *CIL* XIII 3256.


Table 10 chronology of permanent military occupation in cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>250 - 275</th>
<th>275 - 300</th>
<th>300 - 325</th>
<th>325 - 350</th>
<th>350 - 375</th>
<th>375 - 400</th>
<th>400 - 425</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amiens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arras</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulogne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Châlons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two phases of barrack buildings

Boulogne

Châlons

Vermand

Reims

Bavay

Military cemeteries found on site

Some evidence of military occupation in sanctuary site

Some evidence of barracks being constructed

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Location in Notita</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tournai</td>
<td>Numerus</td>
<td>ND Occ. XXVIII 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turnancenses</td>
<td>ND Or. V. 46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ND Occ. VII 121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ND Occ. XL 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ND Occ. XL 53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ND Occ. XL 56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavai</td>
<td>Units of Nervii</td>
<td>ND Occ. XXVIII 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ND Or. VIII. 35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassel</td>
<td>Units of Menapii</td>
<td>ND Occ. VII 83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ND Or. VIII. 35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouzon</td>
<td>Musmagenes</td>
<td>ND Occ. VII.105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cortoriacum (Courtrai)</td>
<td>Cortoriacenses</td>
<td>ND Occ. V 245/ Occ. VII 88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geminiacum (Liberchies)</td>
<td>Geminiacenses</td>
<td>ND Occ. V 246/ Occ. VII 87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This would make an impressive *prima facie* case to support the argument that soldiers were a common feature in many of the various urban centres of *Belgica II* throughout the whole period. Having soldiers permanently garrisoned in cities was common practice in the Near East for the whole of the Roman period, while in the west it seems to have been rare. Therefore this was a substantial change from the early imperial period. However, one can argue that such a composite picture fails to reflect a dynamic situation.

French archaeological literature has a tendency to assume any military evidence in a city is synonymous with the presence of a garrison. The appearance of ‘military’ burials at Vermand has been attributed to a ‘garrison’ without further elucidation. Amiens has evidence for 3 different units being based there which has been argued to represent a long-term situation that applied to much of the 4th century. However, there is no certainty that these were permanent residents. Units under the command of *duces* with the name *Ursarienses* are found in Pannonia, Rhaetia and at Rouen in the *Notitia*, which probably represents the situation at the end of the 4th century. While the presence of a detachment at Rouen could easily be interpreted as a garrison transfer, the time frame of almost a century between the two pieces of evidence is too long to make any secure assignments of permanent residence. A unit of the same name with the rank of *pseudocomitatus* appears under the command of the *Magister equitum Galliarum* somewhere in Gaul. Hoffmann has identified this as part of the same regiment found at Amiens, but there is no way of confirming this. The Roman habit of dividing up units and spreading them around the Empire means that it would be perverse to argue that the different units *Ursarienses* were not related. What their geographical spread seems to support is the fact that they maintained a capacity for mobility throughout the 4th century. The *catafactii* tombstones (discussed above) seem to have a stronger link to the city because of the appearance of the regiment of *Catafacti Ambianenses* recorded in the *Notitia*. This would

616 For example at Bordeaux see H. Lafont Coutourier and others, *Saint Augustin: Une Mémoire d’Algérie* (Bordeaux, 2003), p. 163.
619 ND. Occ. XXXIII.47 (Pannonia); ND Occ. XXXV.20 (Rhaetia); ND Occ. XXXVII.21 (Rouen) with the qualifications discussed in the introduction.
imply that the 2 cavalry stelae represented an earlier stage of a long-term occupation, to the extent that the regiment adopted the civitas into its nomenclature, but again this is speculation.\textsuperscript{621} On one hand the presence of the tombstones does imply that the community responsible for their interment were present for sufficient time to make the investment of a tombstone worthwhile. However, it is worth noting that the stelae were not actually found in the city itself, but a few miles outside at St Achuel.\textsuperscript{622} This could have been a result of the slabs being moved from the city (for example when the city wall was erected), or because the cavalrymen were based in a fort that has yet to be discovered (similar, though later, than that found at Revelles).\textsuperscript{623} We also don’t know when the Ambianenses set off to the east. Hoffmann has suggested that they moved with Magnentius in 351, but there are plenty of other earlier occasions when this transfer could have occurred if we are looking at it being a result of civil wars.\textsuperscript{624} A good case could be made for their presence being related to the Carausius-Allectus revolt and its aftermath, where it subsequently moved on campaign several times.\textsuperscript{625}

It can be argued that the evidence for permanent military garrisons in Belgica II is actually therefore quite thin, and based on circular arguments. Most of the tombstones that survive in Belgica II date from the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} century and at the latest the early 4\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{626} This would imply that they were serving with the various Tetrarchic armies that can be traced actively campaigning across northern Gaul.\textsuperscript{627} Those units that took the name of their civitates (see figure 5) may well have been named after their permanent base, but this is another circular argument. It can be just as easily argued that they were named after the place where they were raised. Those that came from the north-west of the province (i.e. the Turnacenses, Nervii and Menapii) were the part of the province that seems to have

\textsuperscript{622} Wightman hesitates to attribute a full-time garrison to Amiens: E.M. Wightman Gallia Belgica (Oxford, 1985), p. 208; she says “base of a heavy-armoured cavalry unit for the first half of the century,” but in Wightman ibid., p. 227, this becomes “Amiens had a semi-permanent garrison”.
\textsuperscript{623} For Revelles see the discussion of the fort in section 2.
\textsuperscript{624} For example Constantine’s attack on Maxentius in 312, his attacks on Licinius in 318 and 324; Constantine II’s attack on Constans in 340 etc.
\textsuperscript{626} See section 1.2.
\textsuperscript{627} The reign of Constantine campaigning in the northern frontier region seems to have been fairly continuous under Maximian and Constantius between 285 and 305: the bagaudae, Alamanni, Franci and the campaigns against Carausius and Allectus all appear in the rather lacunose sources see A. Bowman, ‘Diocletian and the First Tetrarchy 284 – 305,’ in A.K. Bowman, P. Garnsey and A. Cameron, eds., Cambridge Ancient History Volume 12: the Crisis of Empire 193 – 337 (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 67 – 89.
experienced the most dislocation in rural settlement, and military recruitment was traditionally taken from that area (see section 4 for full discussion). Given that none of these units are in their place of origin in the Notitia indicates that they had originally been raised from population of the civitas territory, before being sent off to serve imperial military interests in variety of areas. The spread does testify to the continued capacity the Roman state had to move of army units around during the 4th (and even early 5th) century, but this doesn’t have to be attributed to the last decades of the 4th century.

The only city that has solid evidence for a permanent military presence for the whole period under investigation is Boulogne with its relatively well understood and excavated barrack blocks. This is did not necessarily represent a break from the past however as Boulogne had been a military base for its entire history as the base of the Classis Britanniae and retained a crucial military role through the 4th century as the main port linking to Britannia. The barracks were occupied until the early 5th century, though establishing an end date is difficult. There is relatively good evidence of garrisons appearing at the end of the 4th century. As discussed in the previous chapter Bavay has evidence of a wooden structure with 8 rooms dating to the end of the 4th century being installed and early 5th century, which resembles the form of barracks found in Valentinianic forts like Altrip and Alzey. Their lack of substantial construction material implies that this was a temporary structure. The other barrack blocks that have been excavated are those at Arras which

630 The key strategic importance can be seen by the extended siege of the city in 293 by Constantius when it was loyal to Carausius: P. J. Casey, The British Usurpers: Carausius and Allectus (London, 1994), pp. 106 – 114.
631 C. Seillier op. cit., pp. 241 – 242. The last phase from the late 4th century is characterised by changes in the layout of the barrack and the increasing amount of hand-turned pottery, which Seillier argues is “Germanic” using outdated ethnic typologies- see section 4.4 for discussion.
are dated to the last two decades of the 4th century and into the early 5th century. The barracks seem to have undergone two phases and Jacques draws a parallel with the famous ‘chalet’ barracks found in Hadrian’s Wall forts such as Housesteads, though he is not aware of recent research which shows these are actually developments from the 2nd century. Jacques identifies the second range of occupation with a cavalry regiment. This is linked to the Laeti Batavorum who are recorded as being based at Arras in the Notitia. There are many problems with this attribution. As we have argued already, there is no indication that laeti should be considered as a military regiment – the indications are that they were a community of farmers liable to military service. The information in the Notitia for this part of the 4th century is probably out of date. These changes are indicative of significant changes in the last decades of the 4th century, and so imply significant changes were occurring in some cities, and they were clearly becoming more directly involved as military bases. It is difficult to say much about this, except the use of barracks strongly implies the maintenance of formal habits of occupation that are consistent with the maintenance of a distinct military identity. As we have discussed already, the series of ‘female’ artefacts associated with the second phase of occupation, are themselves quite consistent with the military communities of attached families that had been a consistent part of soldiers’ lives since the 2nd century.

The dangerous tendency to maximise the military aspects of cities can be seen at Arras in arguments for the barracks representing a continuity of use based on the existence of the “Germanic sanctuary” in the preceding decades (370s – 80s), which provides evidence for

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634 A. Jacques, ‘L’Occupation Militaire d’Arras au Bas-Empire’, in F. Vallet and M. Kazanski, eds., L’Armée Romaine et les Barbares du IIIe au VIIe siècle (Rouen, 1993), pp. 197 – 99. The buildings are identified by the excavators as barracks, containing contubernia, with a papillo (common room) and an arms store. There is a second period of occupation in this stage, identified by the demolition of the room at the north end of barrack block A. This was replaced by an oven, used for baking bread, protected by a post-built shed (10m x 9m). The internal structure of the buildings was affected, with partitions dividing the rooms into smaller units, doted with rectangular pits and silos. The internal structure of the buildings was also affected, with partitions dividing the rooms into smaller units, doted with rectangular pits and silos. Given the remains of amphorae and dolia in these pits these were probably for storing foodstuffs. Finds from this period consist of many objects that suggest a female presence – bronze and silver rings, gold earrings, jet black bracelets and bronze brooches. A military occupation is still indicated by finds of a spur, buckles, daggers and lead plumbatae. Spears, pommels and bronze decorations are consistent with cavalry soldiers. The barracks seem to have been occupied until the 420s, though this is largely speculative and based on pottery in the absence of monetary evidence.

635 See for example the quality of discussion achieved by N. Hodgson and P.T. Bidwell, ‘Auxiliary Barracks in a New Light: Recent Discoveries on Hadrian’s Wall’, Britannia, 35 (2004), 121-157, which relies on the high quality excavations and recording in Romano-British forts over the last few decades.

636 ND XLII.40 Praefectus laetorum Batavorum Nemetaicensium, Atrabatis Belgicae secundae.

637 See chapter 1.
ritual practices unknown in northern Gaul during the Roman period. While a military identification for the sanctuary is impossible to prove conclusively, Jacques argues that it is inherently plausible. The sanctuary would be evidence for the maintenance of an idiosyncratic cult by the military unit and its families, which would be indicative of their non-Roman origins but also of their integration into the Roman administrative and social systems given that this occurrence in the city boundaries clearly needed some official sanction. Jacques argues that the group can this be associated with a group of foederati. However, the argument is based on a series of assumptions that we have already argued against, namely that ‘Germanic’ and ‘Military’ identities are interchangeable in late Roman Belgica, when they are most certainly not. There is no particular reason, short of ethnographic stereotyping, to argue this sanctuary is Germanic, and the excavators’ parallels are rather weak. There are some parallels for these ritual behaviours elsewhere, and it is entirely possible that this centre was a result of a local group or community, rather than one inserted from the outside.

### 3.3.6 Soldiers in cities

Many surviving pieces of legislation responding to various issues raised by the question billeting soldiers in the houses of urban dwellers in the Theodosian and Justinianic legal codices would indicate that soldiers were quite common features in cities. This refers to

639 A. Jacques, ibid., p. 236
641 They use the partially dismembered bodies and scalped skulls of thirteen bodies found in a well at Regensburg-Harting as a parallel but this is quite a different context interpreted as a massacre at a Roman villa site by raiding Alamanni in the 260s/70s see J. Drinkwater, The Alamanni and Rome, 213-496 (Caracalla to Clovis) (Oxford, 2007), pp. 78 – 79
642 One can take two approaches here. Firstly there is the argument that the evidence shows either the revival or persistence of pre-Roman practices which are invisible materially elsewhere: There are some analogies from late La Téne Belgica at sanctuaries such as Gournay-sur-Aronde and Ribemont, see J. L. Brunaux, The Celtic Gauls: Gods, Rites and Sanctuaries (London, 1988). The other is that some parallel odd ritual behaviours are found in similar sites e.g. there are a series of infant burials that appear in some late Roman forts in Britain (Portchester) see B. Cunliffe, Excavations at Porchester Castle Vol. 1 (London, 1975), pp. 375-77; D. Welsby, The Roman Military Defence of the British Provinces in its Later Phases (Oxford, 1982), pp. 87 – 90.
643 See for example the collection of rescripts that deal with billeting in Codex Theodosianus VII.8 – though note that the majority of these rescripts deal with issues in the East, which could reflect the balance of survival was more likely in the East by the 420s, or because that was the issue arose more. One cannot be certain which of these views is the most appropriate.
soldiers passing through cities on campaign, rather than permanently stationed. Ammianus’
descriptions of campaigns in Gaul under Julian and Valentinian imply a considerable amount
of military movement, but these events can be interpreted as being a temporary situation as
a result of acute military and political crises rather than a description of a ‘normal’ state of
affairs. The mention of Reims as a focus of military mobilisation could be as a result of its
status as the provincial capital, as well as its strategic position on the road network, which
would have made it an appropriate place to assemble, both politically and logistically, given
its range of state enterprises. It cannot be doubted that given the arterial road network of
Belgica II and the intensity of direct imperial involvement in northern Gaul after the ending
of the Gallic Empire saw a considerable number of soldiers passing through urban sites in
the 4th century, and the city walls or their suburbs would have been needed to provide
temporary accommodation at least.

The evidence of Arras probably reflects internal changes to the nature of military occupation
in terms of how the army unit was supplied and managed at the end of the 4th century and
into the early 5th century. The analogy of Dichin is helpful in associating the change of
internal organisation of military sites with social and economic change; as opposed to the
recruitment of soldiers with a different ethnicity, which is often the explanation. Such
arrangements need not mean that cities assumed the appearance of forts. In the East the
army had long been based in cities, but had often taken over an area for its own use and
continued to maintain their separate identity. There is no reason why this was not also
happening in the cities of Belgica II during the late Roman period.

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644 Reims is described as the mobilization point for Julian and Valentinian: Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, XV.2.8; XVII.2.1 (Julian assembles his forces at Reims in 356 and 357) Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, XXVI.5.14; XXVII.2.1 – 10 (Valentinian mobilises an army at Reims in 366 – 67). Both of these campaigns were response to particular problems facing the Roman government. The aftermath of Magnentius’ usurpation in 350 - 353 and Julian’s usurpation and campaigning in the East in 361 – 363 seem to have been large scale instability in the northern provinces given the narratives of campaigning and political instability which is clear in the pages of Ammianus e.g. usurpation of Silvanus in 355 and the death of Charietto in 364 which led to the significant campaign of restoration undertaken by Valentinian.

645 See table 8.

646 The two best examples are at Dura-Europus and Palmyra: see B. Isaac, The Limits of Empire (Oxford, 1992), pp. 269-282.
3.3.7 Conclusions

It must be stressed that there is no denial that defence had no role to play in the changes to urban sites in the 3rd and 4th centuries.\textsuperscript{647} However, a reductionist viewpoint is unsustainable and it seems more likely that the symbolism of these structures evolved across the 4th century. The complexity of the phenomenon makes the argument that city walls represented a ‘militarisation’ of the landscape of Belgica II an inadequate one. The intensity of the military presence was variable, and could be reduced as well as increased. The evidence does seem to indicate how important the late Roman state was to the cities of Belgica II both in terms of economic support and imperial patronage. The capacity of some sites to transform themselves into the 5th century and beyond implies they maintained a degree of involvement from their own local élites which suggests one should not be blinded by the impressive physical monuments to imperial activity. The variety of unique urban experiences suggests that local factors, although difficult to trace archaeologically, were still important.

Section 4: the militarization of the countryside in Belgica II

To what extent did the imperial government take over Belgica II and militarise it completely, secure the rural areas with forts and billet troops in the province to control its supplies? Vermeulen argues that: “Late Roman developments in the extreme north-west of Belgic Gaul were quite revolutionary”, suggesting that imperial military policy was one of the major factors in explaining this.\textsuperscript{648} The 3rd century ‘crisis’ and the barbarian raids caused the abandonment of the region, and it was only the heavy settlement of Roman troops and military installations in the province that restored it.\textsuperscript{649} Such a focus on political-military events is distorting however. As Vermeulen admits “the archaeological evidence [for destruction] is minimal.”\textsuperscript{650} Causation is controversial, as even older ideas on the wider environment of 4th century Belgica e.g. the marine transgression of the North Sea (Dunkirk

\textsuperscript{647} One can question against whom the defence was needed more: external or internal enemies!
\textsuperscript{649} F. Vermeulen \textit{ibid.}, pp. 132 – 133.
\textsuperscript{650} F. Vermeulen \textit{ibid.}, p. 131.
II), are now being questioned.\textsuperscript{651} This section will try and examine the extent to which the countryside was militarised, in light of recent research.\textsuperscript{652} An initial point to make is how far the landscape of \textit{Belgica} II is \textit{lacunae}. Salvage operations over the last two decades have increased the number of excavated sites, but the system of regionally organised archaeological research units does not particularly help scholars with narrow chronological concerns, as field archaeologists often deal with a huge range of sites that cover several millennia.

\textbf{4.1 The rural landscape}

If \textit{Belgica} II’s rural resources had been so important to provisioning the \textit{limites} in the early Empire, and these had been based on increased specialisation and control of rural labour and land management, then the disappearance of villas would imply a major dislocation during the late Roman period.\textsuperscript{653} The existence of a consumption-driven élite in these structures helped explain the virtuous cycle of Roman taxation that gave the Empire such economic power in the first three centuries AD.\textsuperscript{654} Extensive research over the last decades has revealed a much higher level of survival of rural sites into the late Roman periods than was previously thought, though research on rural areas in \textit{Belgica} II is still incomplete and varies enormously from region to region.\textsuperscript{655} The problem of identifying 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} century artefacts, and the destruction of late Roman layers by ploughing, makes the possibilities of accurate quantitative work problematic.\textsuperscript{656} Even if one holds more traditional views on rural occupation levels, depopulation does not necessarily mean a decrease in production as

\textsuperscript{651} F. Vermeulen, ‘Les Campagnes de la Belgique Septentrionale et des Pay-Bas Meridionaux’, in P. Ouzoulias, and others, eds., \textit{Les Campagnes de la Gaule à la Fin de l’Antiquité: Actes du Colloque, Montpellier, 11-14 mars 1998} (Antibes, 2001), p. 50. We find the same basic line in many studies of settlement patterns on the northwestern Belgian coast. For example at Aardenburg, Besuijen makes the assertions that barbarian raids caused the fort’s abandonment before admitting that there is no positive evidence to support this assessment, only contextual conjecture: G. Besuijen, \textit{Rodanum: A Study of the Roman Settlement at Aardenburg and Its Metal Finds} (Leiden, 2008), pp. 61 – 62: “The destruction of the \textit{castellum} as a result of invading tribes remains hypothetical.”

\textsuperscript{652} See chapter 2 for a fuller discussion.


\textsuperscript{655} This can be seen in the relevant sections of the local Cartes Archéologique de la Gaule where most plead ignorance for rural settlement patterns in the late Roman period e.g. Oise etc.

what is often abandoned is marginal and unproductive land.\textsuperscript{657} What is clear therefore is that the traditional picture of rural abandonment and decline in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century must be abandoned, and that Wightman’s view of nucleation is untenable given that settlement seems to have been dispersed.\textsuperscript{658}

Crucially, the research shows that \textit{Belgica} II was made up of a series of micro-regions. Brulet’s survey of rural sites across the northern section of Gaul (including most of northern \textit{Belgica} II) calculates that there was a decline from approximately 720 sites in the late Empire to around 110.\textsuperscript{659} Even within this data set there is regional variation as the areas most touched by rural abandonment are the sandy regions of Flanders, northern Brabant & Campine. Surveys in the sandy region of the Lys and Escaut found that of the eight sites that were excavated, only one revealed evidence of activity in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{660} Further south towards the more urbanized area of the province, the Scarpe valley survey suggests that many of the rural sites which had been occupied during the 1\textsuperscript{st} – 3\textsuperscript{rd} centuries continued to be occupied during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century at least, although often the occupation took a different form.\textsuperscript{661} Field walking almost always turns up elements of 4\textsuperscript{th} century use, though it often takes several attempts to find this material.\textsuperscript{662} Haselgrove’s survey of settlement patterns across the first millennia in the Aisne valley shows that while the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century was indeed a high point in crude numbers, the decline to the 4\textsuperscript{th} century is not catastrophic, with a survival rate of 60%. The 5\textsuperscript{th} century sees quite a marked decline however (see figure 4).\textsuperscript{663}

\textsuperscript{658} P. Van Ossel, \textit{op. cit.}, (1992), pp. 171 – 2.
\textsuperscript{659} R. Brulet, \textit{La Gaule septentrionale au Bas-Empire : occupation du sol et défense du territoire dans l’arrière-pays du Limes aux IVe et Ve siècles} (Trier, 1990); F. Vermeulen, ‘Les campagnes de la Belgique Septentrionale et des Pay-Bas Meridionaux,’ in P. Ouzoulias, and others eds., \textit{op. cit.}, (Antibes, 2001), p. 50: far north of the province, including territory in Germania Superior, it has been estimated that 300 implantations of sites (1\textsuperscript{st} – 3\textsuperscript{rd} centuries AD) are reduced to 5 in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century.
\textsuperscript{660} F. Vermeulen, ‘Les Campagnes de la Belgique Septentrionale et des Pay-Bas Meridionaux’ in P. Ouzoulias \textit{and others, op. cit.}, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{661} E. Louis, ‘A De-Romanised landscape in Northern Gaul: the Scarpe Valley from the 4\textsuperscript{th} to the 9\textsuperscript{th} Century AD’, in W. Bowden, L. Lavan and C. Machado, eds., \textit{op. cit.}, (2004), pp. 479 – 504.
\textsuperscript{662} E. Louis, \textit{ibid.}, p. 489; much knowledge of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century/5\textsuperscript{th} century settlement is based on small numbers of Argonne ware picked up in field surveys and often called ‘transient settlement.’ This may be true, but only excavation could prove it, but given the lower levels of finds from some Late Roman sites this is not an incentive to dig. For further details on this conundrum see R. Clotuche, ‘The Scheldt Valley Commercial Activity Zone: 350 Hectares of the Gallo-Roman Landscape’, \textit{Britannia}, 49 (2009), 41 – 64.
The most striking transformation in *Belgica* II was the disappearance of the spectacular *pars urbana* from many villas: in the north of the province, there is no evidence of these villas surviving into the 4th century. This pattern is not universal, and villas such as Blanzy-les-Fismes (Aisne) in the Aisne valley and Vieux-Rouen-Sur-Besle (Somme) in Picardy seem to have retained expensive display items such as mosaics and a large surface area, and share many characteristics with the grand villas found in Aquitaine. However in the current state of evidence, knowledge about the élite of the province is poor. There does seem to be dislocation between the late Roman and Merovingian period as the only known villa site that became the basis of a later 6th century settlement was at St.-Germain-les-Corbeil which does imply that those sites which did survived into the 4th century did not last particularly

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long. While the focus on villas is understandable, their tendency to dominate discussion on rural life is misleading given that only a small part of the population actually lived in them.

As more careful field-walking techniques have been developed so larger number of sites now show some form of continuity of occupation. Some sites occupied only a small proportion of the previously occupied space, or moved activities into other areas. For example at Famechon in the Somme, where the 3rd century *pars urbana* had been apparently destroyed, but the *pars rustica* was used with a series of renovations which involved some reuse of older structures, and some new building work as well. The other defining features were the increasing use of wood as a building material on many of the sites that survived into the 4th and 5th centuries. These changes are extremely significant but this does not necessarily mean large scale rural impoverishment. Many sites still reveal large numbers of artefacts when they have been excavated, information that cannot be discovered by field walking. Le Luyot at Seclin (Nord) for example, which was occupied in the second half of the 4th and into the 5th centuries, has over 100 coins and large amounts of Argonne ware – the main high quality ceramic product of the period. Similarly, the rural site at Neuville-Saint-Amand (Aisne) saw a re-organisation of the earlier villa site along quite different lines, and the two parts of the establishment are no longer as clearly distinctive as they were in the first phase. A large farm structure with evidence of an opulent lifestyle seems to have existed in the 4th century given the remains of marble and wall paintings.

How far did *Belgica* II’s rural production relate to the military? Recent studies on rural production suggest a significant decrease in artisanal activity in the late Empire, and a move

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towards more ‘autarchic’ modes of production.\textsuperscript{671} Palynological evidence shows that there was a return to trees and wasteland at the end of the Roman period, but this cannot be tied down precisely.\textsuperscript{672} Supplies had to be transported from Aquitaine and Britain under Julian, which implies that the imperial establishment in \textit{Belgica II} was a net consumer of goods and produced little by itself.\textsuperscript{673} However, these forms of information are very unreliable as guides to production levels. The question is very difficult to assess, given the lack of data, but what one can say is that if the élites from the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century were still producing large amounts in the 4\textsuperscript{th}, they do not seem to have been spending the profits on ostentatious consumption that can be measured in the archaeological record. The increasing number of rural sites being excavated seems to show that agricultural production was still continuing, at a modest subsidy level. The unpredictability of environmental factors bringing great variability to harvests as well as the particular political circumstances of the situation in the 350s after Magnentius’s revolt may indicate that Julian’s event as expediency rather than the norm.\textsuperscript{674} The changes in the tax system, and the tendency to extract agricultural surplus in kind possibly made a difference as a lack of monetization could have restricted growth, but this view is rather outdated. Even if there was no monetary stimulus as experienced by the eastern half of the Empire at the end of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century on the back of the reissued \textit{solidus} plenty of rural sites have evidence of coins and pottery showing a level of economic exchange, though the question is whether these were ‘official’ sites.

As we have seen in section 2, the evidence seems to point towards soldiers having access to supplies of a sufficient level to maintain an élite status within society. Oudenburg in the 280s, despite the economic dislocation of the period, was still receiving large amounts of pottery on a regional basis. The success of Argonne ware, being found on all sites in large numbers until the 5\textsuperscript{th} century, is evidence for continued exchange involving the military. Britain, given the evidence for rural economic vitality in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century, was probably a major source of food. But the evidence of local supplies for pottery becoming more

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{671} M. Polfer, \textit{L’Artisanat dans l’Économie de la Gaule Belgique Romaine à Partir de la Documentation Archéologique} (Montagnac, 2005), p. 102.
  \item \textsuperscript{672} E. Louis, \textit{op. cit.}, (2004), p. 490.
  \item \textsuperscript{673} Ammianus Marcellinus, \textit{Res Gestae}, XIV.10; XVII.8.
  \item \textsuperscript{674} There is considerable evidence that the 350s do seem to have been quite traumatic in northern Gaul, given the series of sites with coin finds that stop then, and the series of sites that have destruction layers from that point. For example the Alf Valley in the Moselle shows plenty of numismatic indications of this at that point see P. Van Ossel and P. Ouzoulas, ‘Rural settlement economy in Northern Gaul in the Late Empire: an overview and assessment’, \textit{Journal of Roman Archaeology}, 13 (2000), p. 136.
\end{itemize}
important at military sites, in line with the ending of the declining amphorae exports from the southern Mediterranean after 350 implies a degree of self-sufficiency. The increasing reliance on local supply networks may well be one factor explaining the movement of some military units into cities in the last decades of the 4th century, as a means of easing matters of supply.

4.2 The fortification of the landscape

As outlined in chapter 2, one of the key features of the late antique countryside is the ‘fortification’ of the landscape. Research tends to show there is very little evidence for ‘fortification’ of villas or rural sites in Belgica II during the 4th and 5th centuries along the models derived from Sidonius’ writings. The closest example that can be given are the ditches creating an enclosure at the late 4th century site of Berry-au-Bac, but these can hardly be called ‘defensive structures’ given their depth. All the known cases in northern Gaul are generally found in the Trier region, e.g. Pfalzel, and even this villa may be better understood as an imperial residence with an attached military base than being related to rural production. In terms of other types of structure, regional patterns are important. In the Rhineland there are over 20 fortified ‘tower-silos’ some of which have been discovered attached to villa sites. The most common type is the tower-silo defended by a ditch that is found in the Cologne region. This can be paralleled to some extent by the discovery of the tower-silo at the site of Seclin (Nord) during the 4th century, which seems to have been constructed as part of a major reorganization of the site. Until this discovery these had not been found outside the Rhineland, and so it indicates that there were shared

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676 P. van Ossel, op. cit., (1992), 341. The ditches are around 0.4m – 0.6m wide.
architectural patterns from across the whole of Belgica II. Why this site was erected is less clear. Bechert argued that all fortified burgi found on the road network were developments of granaries from the early Empire.\footnote{T. Bechert, ‘Wachturm oder Kornspeicher? Zur Bauweise spätrömischer Burgi’, Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt 8 (1978), 127–132.} This would seem to be contradicted by Seclin, as although the silo was enclosed, there are no indications of a defensive structure beyond the walls of the silo themselves. Other burgi in Belgica II such as Liberchies and Revelles do not appear to have had towers either, so this would suggest such a view is incorrect.\footnote{See section 2.} It is hard to differentiate between the silo being a watchtower or a storage base, but the rural context and the continued development of the site through the 4\textsuperscript{th} century as an agricultural development would suggest that identification as a granary is best and the defensive elements toned down. The excavators place its construction within a framework of insecurity.\footnote{S. Révillion and K. Bouche, op. cit., p. 115.}

Table 10: rural sites with elements of fortification in the Late Roman period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Defensive features</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Seclin (Nord) (Le Haut de Clauwiers) | • There are several closures of buildings and redirecting of the site with ditches etc.  
  • The new enclosed system surrounds a tour-silo (9m x 16m) constructed in stone.                                                                 | 4\textsuperscript{th} century and 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries |
<p>| Berry-au-Bac (Aisne)     | • The late Roman occupation is mainly defined by a series of enclosures using U and V ditches 0.40 – 0.60m wide.                                                                                                   | Late 4\textsuperscript{th} to 5\textsuperscript{th} century       |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Period</th>
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| Conde-sur-Aisne (Aisne)   | • The late Roman period settlement has an oval ditch 2m wide; filled with many stones surrounding some areas of the site.  
  • Another ditch from the late 4th century or Merovingian period has an irregular shape and contains a number of calcium blocks. | 4th and 5th centuries |
| Saint-Pierre-sur-Vence (Ardennes) | • The site seems to have a palisade to the west side. | c. 310 – c. 350 |
| Chatel-Chéhéry (Ardennes) | • The site was fortified in the late Empire and dominated habitation on the east slope.  
  • Large amounts of 4th century pottery are found on the site, some with Christian motifs.  
  • 110 coins were found across the area – from Hadrian to 388 – 402. | 4th and 5th centuries |
| Omont (Ardennes)         | • Positioned on a blocked spur (éperon barré) which had a castle built onto it in 883 has led to the theory that there was a fort here.  
  • A child burial was found with an axe. | 4th and 5th centuries |

The other main set of fortified sites are found in the east of the province in the Meuse region, where many such ‘hillforts’ have been identified as being occupied from the 3rd century onwards with varying degrees of permanence. These sites are largely out of the
scope of this study, so the discussion will be brief. There is an enormous variety between them in terms of the sophistication of the structures associated with them and the period of their occupation. Of the three sites in the study’s remit, there has been an argument to suggest Omont was a military site occupied by auxiliary barbarian soldiers.\textsuperscript{684} The evidence for this is very weak, based on an axe found in a young male’s burial. The site certainly was a fortified strong point in the Merovingian period, and while the site was occupied, there is little evidence that one could call it ‘fortified’ beyond its relatively secure position. We cannot tell if such a site was a permanently occupied site or a temporary refuge connected to other sites in the region. Saint-Pierre-sur-Vence seems to have had a palisade, given the evidence of post holes, but nothing further can be said about this. This could just as easily be related to pastoralism as defence. Chatel-Chéhéry on the other hand seems to have been a significant production centre given the evidence of decorated ceramics that have been found there, along with its coins. This site seems to have been occupied consistently across the century, without any particular evidence of the site being given any extra defensive functions.

There are some indications of perceived insecurity in the evidence, but it hardly mounts up to a large scale fortification of the countryside. What one can suggest from the fragmentary evidence, is that regional factors are probably influencing the changes in settlement patterns. The Ardennes has a long history of upland settlement, and a return to these sites was a common feature of the late Antique period more generally. The other sites have some indication of a wish to control the produce, but it is impossible to say whether this was due to military intervention or private initiative. Vermeulen strongly argues that the evidence for a continued rural population in the \textit{vici} and other settlements of the northern part of the province only exist while there was a strong military system working i.e. the Bavay-Tongres road, so there probably was a relationship between security and rural settlement, but it is hard to say anything more than that on the current evidence.\textsuperscript{685}


\textsuperscript{685} F. Vermeulen, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 53.
4.3 Involvement of the state in rural production

The theme of *agri deserti* is one that comes up regularly in the late Roman Empire and implies a major concern about abandoned land.\(^{686}\) This is not to say that this land was necessarily empty simply due to invasion or depopulation.\(^{687}\) Still, there are many indications that the changes in the rural contexts of northern Gaul are the result of large scale settlement of abandoned lands.\(^{688}\) Such contexts have been seen as creating a ‘militarised’ landscape full of *Germani* who were settled as ‘soldier-farmers.’ It is indisputable that one of the demonstrable changes in the countryside during the period is the growth in the number of ‘Germanic’ settlements that are identified with settlers from outside the Empire. These have been strongly argued to represent a deliberate policy of settlement by the Roman government, especially from the mid-4\(^{th}\) century onwards. A series of sites to the north of the road system in the north-east of the Menapii between the Lys and Escaut, which have been partially excavated and seem to date between 360/70 and the middle of the 5\(^{th}\) century. These also largely involve structures in wood, and pottery which has stylistic and petrographic links to the north of Holland/Germany. Vermeulen identifies them as being strong candidates for Franks settled in Toxandria as *foederati*.\(^{689}\)

Vermeulen strongly argues this is the case in the *civitas Menapiorum* for example, to replace the long-term depopulation of the area from the late 3\(^{rd}\) century.\(^{690}\) This of course confirms what we know about the *laeti* from the written sources. Most of these sites, with their defining features, such as wooden cabins and stables, are found in Germania inferior and so lie outside of the scope of this project.\(^{691}\) As Halsall has strongly argued, settlement

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\(^{686}\) Specifically concerned with 1332km\(^2\) “deserted and unkempt” lands in central and southern Italy in the *Codex Theodosianus*. XI.28.2.

\(^{687}\) This could just as well result from the abandonment of marginal land, concentration of settlement or new management strategies increasing productivity. N. Christie, ‘Landscapes of Change in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Themes, Directions and Problems’, in N. Christie, ed., *Landscapes of Change: Rural Evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 15; C. Grey, *Constructing Communities in the Late Roman Countryside* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 171 – 2, discusses the potential for this to be a product of disjunctions of land use and the tax system rather than abandoned land *per se*.

\(^{688}\) N. Christie, *ibid.*, p. 15.


structures are not necessarily markers of ethnicity. Restoration of structures and refurbishments in wood are a key feature of the late Roman period, marking a progressive transition from the Roman model of architecture which many Gaus had adopted. Many of these features such as aisled, post-built structures appear to be associated in northern Gaul with an indigenous habitat mode that persisted alongside villas and into the Early Medieval period. There are also sunken-featured settlements, which have often been labeled as “Germanic”. Despite their similarities in spatial organization to sites along/near the Limes those in Belgica II do have distinctive features in terms of the plans of the building and the material collected archaeologically. This has led Périn to argue for a continuity of Gallic traditions, but that Germanic influences must not be forgotten.

There is some evidence of involvement of rural communities with forts. For example along the coast to the north of Oudenburg two small settlements were discovered at Zerkegem and Roskem. These seem to have been occupied during the last occupation period of the fort. Several potteries were found, although no buildings, and Vermeulen argues for the association with the forts on the basis of the ‘Germanic’ wives in the cemetery. While this is less convincing, and much is made of the ‘Germanic’ pottery being similar to that found in Free Germany and Anglo-Saxon England, the case can be made that these sites were actually serving the fort, given the evidence we have already discussed which showed local supplies being central to ceramic finds during the late Roman period, even in the last phase. A


695 See references in section 2. Vermeulen argues against the attribution that the settlement was occupied immediately after the fort’s evacuation, and this seems perfectly feasible given that he dates the end to 410, which is driven by the historical context rather than the material evidence which could be interpreted to last longer. F. Vermeulen, ‘Les Campagnes de la Belgique Septentrionale et des Pay-Bas Meridionaux’ in P. Ouzoulas and others op. cit., (2001), p. 57.

696 See section 1.3.

common argument to support the ethnic attribution of settlements to ‘Germani’ in rural sites is by reference to the often large quantities of hand thrown pottery that have been argued to represent traditions of production brought from outside the frontiers in Free Germany. F98 Finds of such pottery are used to argue that the group who made them were from outside the Empire and had brought their own traditions of ceramic production with them as a means of maintaining a separate identity from the local indigenous population. F99 The latest archaeological research is now accepting that local traditions of hand thrown pottery can be identified across northern Gaul, which often pre-date the Roman period, and in many cases carried on being used into the Middle Ages. While these trends were largely replaced by wheel-turned imports and new forms of local production, handmade ceramic traditions never completely died out. F00 Therefore we must see this pottery not as simple indications of “Germanic” settlers but as a function of economic and social change.

The finds of the cemetery at Vron make a similar point. Seillier strongly argued these burials represented a “Germanic” settlement in the 370s made up of a force of auxiliaries and mercenaries recruited into the army and garrisoned on the Litus Saxonnicum. F01 The tendency to ‘over-militarise’ these groups misses an alternative explanation. Excavations at Le Muret (Somme) on the channel coast, at the mouth of the River Authie, revealed a site that was reoccupied in the 320s after a possibly considerable hiatus. F02 On coinage and ceramic evidence the site seems to have been occupied from the 320s to the early 5th century. Much is unclear about the nature of the site, though it was probably an island, but its ceramics showed itself to be at the centre of numerous communication networks given that its

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F00 F. Vermeulen “Transition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages in the South of Sandy Flanders, Belgium: rural settlement” Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt (1992)


ceramics came from Britain as well as northern and eastern Gaul. The excavators try hard to give the site a military function, given its context between three fortified sites noted in the Notitia, but they are forced to admit there are no artefacts that permit any military assignment. The proximity with Vron is telling, as Seillier’s arguments were largely based on the contextual evidence, seeing the coast as a military zone. Rather than these sites being ‘military’ settlements or official implantations, it is just as logical to see groups of peasant farmers setting themselves up near potential markets, or along communication routes. Like with Zergekem and Roskem, these settlements could be found outside the territorium of the forts. In that sense it could be argued to be very similar to the situation in the Early Empire, where settlements grew up around forts. Vermeulen argues that the close connection of many sites with Roman forts in Germania I as well is explained by the provisioning of forts with material from these villages/settlements.

By denying ethnicity in the material record, we can easily enter a paradoxical state of denial that there was any movement across the frontiers at all. The literary sources are overwhelming in their testimony that it had been imperial policy since the 2nd century AD to settle large groups of non-Romans in imperial territory. Apparent decline in rural settlement is not a feature unique in the late Roman Gallic landscape. We can say for sure that laeti were settled with their families at the end of the 3rd century to replace the loss of native, rural cultivators in many of the territories of Belgica II. The panegyricist seems to differentiate between a ‘Francus’ and a ‘Laetus’ in his speech, which has led to the suggestion that the laeti were actually ex-provincials. There is a clear emphasis on the laeti to serve as a labour service, and had a variety of obligations, including military

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703 Dorset, Oxford and Canterbury to be precise, as well as Argonne ware and two pieces from the Rhineland.
704 Étaples, Crotay, Cap Hornu are all potentially identified as forts in the Notitia but there is no evidence for them on the ground – see appendix 1.
707 Early imperial Achaia also experienced a rapid decline in occupied sites from the 3rd century BC onwards which was maintained until the late Roman period, where from the 4th century there was an increase in site numbers. This reminds us that a decline in site numbers can be a complex phenomenon which needs careful explanation. S. Alcock, Graecia Capta: the Landscapes of Roman Greece (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 33 – 92.
service.\textsuperscript{710} Then again the Panegyricist cannot be trusted to be precise about these matters given that he was not giving a legalistic assessment but a general rhetorical speech praising the clemency and farsightedness of the emperor. Allowing outside groups to settle the land was a \textit{topos} of late Roman rhetoric, which was often used to conceal the extent to which the government did not have much choice. Did the \textit{laeti} make up self-governing communities separate from the surrounding territories? The mention of a \textit{praepositus} in the \textit{Notitia} and the Theodosian code does not prove this.\textsuperscript{711} \textit{Terrae laeticae} allocated to settlers by municipal authorities does not support the view that they lived in separate enclaves outside of the city territories, or that they were exclusively part of imperial estates.\textsuperscript{712} Whittaker argues that the \textit{laeti} and the other associated settlements made a significant and lasting impact on the labour supply of the late Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{713}

As we have argued throughout, context is everything with material evidence. The temptation to attribute any rural site with a weapon or some sign of official favour to the \textit{laeti} uses a general term from the written sources to a specific archaeological context, which may be correct, but also brings false certainty to the inherent complexity of rural settlement.\textsuperscript{714} The site of St-Ouen-du-Breil, which dates to the early 4\textsuperscript{th} century, with its series of huts based around a pond, sits askew with other settlements in the area just to the south west of \textit{Belgica} II in \textit{Lugdunensis} IV does seem to be an implantation, which with the large hoard found, shows access to considerable wealth.\textsuperscript{715} Legislation concerning ‘barbarian’ marriages with Roman citizens under Valentinian, has sensibly been linked with concerns over status, a traditional Roman worry, rather than being an ethnic issue. It would seem better to suggest that a whole range of new settlers came into the landscape, through a variety of methods: as veterans, \textit{gentiles}, \textit{dediticii} and \textit{laeti}, or even under their own

\textsuperscript{710} \textit{Pan. Lat.} VIII (V) 9.1 \textit{atque hos omnes provincialibus vestris ad obsequium distributos} (nb use of serviendo and serviunt above); \textit{Pan. Lat.} VIII (V) 9.4 \textit{quin etiam si ad dilectum vocetur occurrat et obsequis teritur et tergo coercetur et servire militiae nomine gratulatur}; \textit{Pan. Lat.} VI (VII) 6.2 – \textit{ut in desertis Galliae regionibus conlocatae (sc. Franciae nations) et pacem Romanam cultu iuvarent et arma dilectu}.

\textsuperscript{711} C. Th. VII.20.10 (369).

\textsuperscript{712} C. Th. XIII.11.10 (399).


\textsuperscript{714} Saint-Pierre-sur-Vence (Ardennes) has several weapons (knives and spears) and is identified as being a laetic settlement. D. Nicolas, \textit{Les Ardennes: Carte Archéologique de la Gaule} (Paris, 2012), p. 398.

steam. Seeing the increasingly common Grübenhauser spread through Belgica II as a combination of migration and cultural exchange is a more satisfying synthesis. From this perspective then, the state did have a role to play in changing rural patterns, but one can probably exaggerate its importance.

4.4 Direct evidence of military presence in the landscape

The final issue is the extent to which the military can be seen as taking a complete takeover of agricultural production. There is evidence of direct military takeovers elsewhere in the Roman period e.g. at Castrum at Dobrinka in the Istrian peninsula argues for an imperial dye station being installed at a villa site in the 5th century. At Sirmione in the late Roman period the large earlier villa was given a defensive cordon and a military cemetery that indicates a form of state takeover. This has been linked to a fleet base operating out of the site. In Belgica II it is the association with weapons, belt sets and/or crossbow brooches that have led to identification with military takeover. The best site which illustrates this is Zoufaques (Pas-de-Calais) where an excavated cellar has provided a well preserved series of stratigraphic levels that give some idea of the different uses that area went through during the 4th and early 5th centuries. Routier attributed an occupation by Germanic auxiliaries undertaking a strategic, defensive role the site on the basis of the weapons finds. These are impressive, though apart from the shield boss, these items are not necessarily certainly military artefacts.

Knives and spears are quite commonly found across rural sites, but particularly in the cemeteries that are so numerous across the countryside of Belgica II. Sadly, space is too

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716 R. Mathisen ‘Provinciales, Gentiles and Marriages between Romans and Barbarians in the Late Roman Empire’, Journal of Roman Studies, 99 (2009), 140-155.
718 N. Christie, op. cit., p. 18.
720 J.-C. Routier op. cit., (2004), pp. 85 – 87: the weapons were a shield boss, a large axe, a small axe, a long knife, 4 other knives, a leaf-like metal strip, a small knife, a bronze spur (similar to one found at Arras), belt buckles in silver; bronze; glass and pendants used by ‘Germanic’ soldiers.
limited to survey this body of evidence, except very selectively. At Neuville-Saint-Amand (Aisne) the recent excavators have made a link between the site and a cemetery nearly 1km away on the basis of finds of ‘Germanic’ and ‘military’ artefacts – i.e. weapons, belt buckles and various female personal items such as brooches and beads. The same link has been made between the reoccupied former villa site at Limé, and the large cemetery at nearby Bois de Sables, which has similar artefacts. Van Ossel argues that these sites are difficult to deal with as they do not clearly distinguish between private and official defence strategies and equipment. There is no site with the clear intersection of many different indicators of military settlement unlike, say, Newel in the Trier region. It is interesting that Routier was beginning to soften his approach and retreat from his militarized interpretation and see Zoufaques as something more complex than evidence for a garrison in his latest work on the site.

The interpretation of cemeteries is a central issue to this theme: Effros, Halsall and Theuws have all argued that it would be better to look for social explanations for the changes in burial patterns in Gaul rather than making ethnic attributions. According to their school of thought these burials represent local phenomena produced by particular circumstances that influenced the deposition of the dead, such as the need to reinforce new social structures that emerged in the context of social and political upheaval. According to Halsall these burials, and attendant female burials, are the product of social and political insecurity, representing the emergence of a new élite class who were seeking to consolidate their

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newly established hold on power. The use of weapons can be seen as a claim to be able to provide security and the deposition of *fibulae* and belt sets a continued use of Roman forms of power to legitimise their rule. This is a society competing for power rather than being able to represent a formal position in the hierarchy. Different burial customs do not have to represent the arrival of intrusive groups from outside the Empire who maintain a particular ethnic identity. Theuws has moved even further than Halsall by suggesting that the burials represent the establishment of new communities on previously unoccupied territories and the establishment of new social norms outside of official ‘Roman’ control. Dahlgren tries to develop these views by arguing that these weapons represent hunting becoming more visible in the archaeological record, as its quasi-military values provided a way for local élites from a variety of different backgrounds to assert themselves.

**Conclusion**

As already discussed in chapter 2 there has been a strong case that the gradual abandonment of the villa-type of rural settlement in northern Gaul corresponds to a cultural shift as there was a move towards wider interaction with northern European society and movement away from Roman/Mediterranean models. Many of the sites seem to have been abandoned long before the end of the 3rd century. For example, the recent Scheldt valley survey of ground in the central part of Belgica II shows an abandonment of all the sites in the 3rd quarter of the 2nd century. Therefore it is probably best to argue that rather than being the main catalyst of change, it would probably be more sensible to argue that army demands themselves shifted. We have already seen in section 2 that the evidence we have is that military units sourced many of their supplies locally. Overall then there is little evidence that one could describe the landscape of *Belgica* II as ‘militarised.’

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Section 5: The Fifth Century

It was argued in chapter 1 that there was considerable continuity of what can be described as a Roman ‘military identity’ into the 5th century. Roman influence could still be exerted over the increasingly autonomous armies within the Empire, but this was crucially diminished in the second half of the 5th century. In this section the persistence of a formal military identity in Belgica II will be traced through to the accession of Clovis to see if an evolutionary pattern can be traced.

5.1 Ducatus Belgicae Secundae in the 5th century

An important question is how long the office of the Ducatus Belgica II existed. Did the position fall into abeyance in the early years of the 5th century, with the series of military and political crises that afflicted Roman rule in Gaul, or did it continue in some form into the 5th century? There has been a suggestion that Germanus of Auxerre held either this office, or the Dux tractus Armoricani et Nervicani, before his accession to the bishopric of Auxerre.730 This argument is based on Germanus’ biographer Constantius describing him as a dux responsible for more than one province (provinciae).731 This does seem rather unlikely given Germanus’ earlier career was in civil administration: after his education in Gaul via legal study in Rome he served as a lawyer in the court of a praefectus.732 His career path would have more logically seen him become a provincial governor (praeses) given the “many provinces” he is mentioned as looking after in his vita. We can most likely attribute Constantius’ imprecision to a lack of clarity about the role of officials in the early 5th century by the time he came to write his work in the 470s.733 There was, of course, a degree of blurring between civilian and military offices in the 4th century, despite the much vaunted

731 Constantius, Vita Germani, 2 “…quem quidem togae praeconii praeminentem protinus res publica ad honorum praesumpsit insignia, ducatus culmen et regimen per provincias conferendo.” (Then, when he was at the height of his reputation in the legal profession, the state promoted him to official rank by conferring on him the supreme office of dux and rule over more than one province).
separation that is usually seen as having been completed under Constantine.734 Another possibility is that the hagiography was strengthened by Germanus having a military career. This would develop the model of the miles Christi that Sulpicius Severus outlined in his Vita Martini, where Martin had rejected the service of the Emperor in return for the service of God.735 The famous story of Germanus’ ‘military’ role in Britain (dux proelii) developed this theme of the Church being the means by which people could be protected from the physical difficulties of the increasingly fragmented Empire, and that the Christian God was the best guarantee of security. This would confirm the idea put forward in chapter 1, that the concept of militia became attached to a concept of theological significance that emerged out of the ambiguous relationship between the Church and the Empire.

Germanus’ activities also coincide with Aëtius’ successes in restoring some form of Roman authority to Gaul.736 Unfortunately, this evidence cannot prove the continuity of the title, and we must assume that it fell into abeyance at some point in the first quarter of the 5th century. One approach to understand the events of Belgica II would be to take Jerome’s account of the destruction of the great invasion of 406/7 seriously, but as with the 3rd century, it seems more convincing to see the internal political instability surrounding Constantine III’s usurpation and move to Arles as being more destructive in the short-term for the administrative/military framework in the province. It seems that the river based settlements e.g. Tournai (Escaut), Courtrai (Lys) & Huy (Meuse) seem to do quite well in the 5th century which implies a decline in the effectiveness of the road network, which hints at what imperial investment in the 4th century had achieved. Gregory refers to a king Chlodio at Cambrai from the first half of the 5th century, who may be identified with the Francus Cloio mentioned by Sidonius fighting Majorian in this period.737 The other major piece of evidence that we have for the 5th century in Belgica II involves the attack on some ‘Franks’ at Vicus Helena by Aëtius at some point between 428 and 448.738

If we have shown caution about knitting together historical chronologies with material evidence in the 4th century then we should be even more cautious in the 5th where both

forms of information become more problematic. One thing we do have is more contemporary perspectives on what was happening. The *Notitia Dignitatum* is, we have argued, an ideological document presenting the aspirations of the rump imperial government who produced it. The fact they published the list reflecting the situation in the early 5th century shows that there was still an ‘ideological’ claim that the office existed *ducatus Belgicae secundae*, and would be appointed again.

All of this implies that the imperial administrative framework was either defunct or localized and the cultural and social shifts that appear in the burial evidence at the end of the 4th century were accelerating towards some form of autonomy. Aëtius’ military policy of rule by ‘punitive expedition’ seems quite different from what we have outlined as being the framework during the 4th/first part of the 5th centuries.739 The problems of dating the disappearance of military units from *Belgica* II is a problem, caused by the loss of regular minted coins providing a chronological structure. On the other hand, Argonne pottery is now seen as continuing into the 5th century, so there is more optimism about some sites than in the past. The barracks at Arras are estimated to have been abandoned around 425.740 Famars is now seen as being occupied to 450 at the earliest, though if it held any troops can’t be confirmed.741 The strong identification of these rulers with important centres in *Belgica* II: Clovis/Childeric (Tournai); Syagrius (Soissons); Ragnacar (Cambrai); Remigius (Reims), does imply that while the traditional purview of the *Dux Belgicae* II was on the coastal area, the cities of the province became the core of military and civilian power during the 5th century. This does imply the persistence of some of the infrastructure, which was of course ultimately directed at soldiers. In this context the possible move towards soldiers being barracked in cities, as at Arras and Bavay seems to indicate longer-term changes at work, and that cities did become the focus of military and thus, after the retreat of central imperial authority, political activity.

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741 R. Clotuche, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
5.2 Aegidius & Syagrius

Rather than give a narrative of events, we will try and compare what we can learn about the relationship of two apparent milites who operated in Belgica II the first being Aegidius who was appointed as Magister Militum by Avitus or Majorian 456 - 458. Much ink has been spilt on the precise context in which these men were operating but the link between Aegidius to Belgica II is made through his son Syagrius, who as rex romannorum, is placed by Gregory of Tours in Soissons, and whose defeat, for Gregory, was a watershed. There is some numismatic evidence to support this. The nature of his position and role has been a subject of considerable discussion as he is one of the few historical figures for whom some detail survives from the north of Gaul. The surviving sources do lack some consistency in their description of the precise titles that Aegidius held. The following table summarises the details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Reference</th>
<th>Aegidius title</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gregory of Tours HF II.13</td>
<td>Magister Militum, Rex Francorum</td>
<td>Late 6th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marius of Avenches Chronicle (463)</td>
<td>Aegidius (no formal title mentioned)</td>
<td>Late 6th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallic Chronicler of 511 (461)</td>
<td>No mention of Aegidius at all</td>
<td>Early 6th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydatius Chronicle</td>
<td>Comes (5.1.212), Comes utriusque militiae</td>
<td>460s (Chronicle ends in 469)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

742 He was probably a native of Gaul, PLRE II Aegidius, 11-12; P. McGeorge ibid, p. 83 favours the appointment being made by Majorian in 458.
743 The precise nature of this episode is mired in controversy with E. James, The Franks (Oxford, 1988), pp. 78 – 80 arguing that Syagrius’ importance was deliberately exaggerated by Gregory of Tours to emphasise the victory of Clovis and P. MacGeorge Late Roman Warlords (Oxford, 2002), pp. 125 – 130 arguing strongly against this view saying that Gregory was reporting a genuine memory.
The principal discrepancy seems to be Aegidius’ formal title. Gregory claims he was *magister militum* while the contemporary Hydatius calls him *comes utriusque militiae* which seems an odd combination of a variety of military titles. This could be used to imply the parochialism of Aegidius’ position: that he was using a variety of Roman titles to legitimise his position in northern Gaul rather than representing a formal relationship to the central Imperial administration. Burgess has suggested that Nepotianus and Arborius who campaigned in Spain during the 450s, and whom Hydatius describes as *magister militiae*, are not Roman *magistri* as they are often described, but Visigothic commanders. Roman titulature was the only available organisational military model (apart from *reges*) so its adoption by the Goths is entirely sensible. Aegidius therefore represents a similar local formulation. However, this is not the only reading as the title of *comes* was quite flexible – technically it signified an official carrying out duties for the imperial court. Many *comites* had specific military roles leading *comitatenses* as ‘*comes rei militaris*’ but there are examples of *magistri militum* also holding the title in a more honorific manner e.g. Stilicho received 4 rescripts in the Theodosian Code describing him as ‘*comes* and *magister militum*.’ Hydatius also compresses the title *dux et magister utriusque militiae* and *comes et magister utriusque militiae* on several other occasions into formulas similar to Aegidius so his rendering supports Gregory, it does not contradict him.

The most notable title attributed to Aegidius is his title of *Rex Francorum*, recorded by Gregory of Tours. Some scholars have questioned whether this is simply an error on Gregory’s part, a result of him transposing the title *rex* on anyone holding authority over

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747 C.Th. VII.22.12, 5.1, 13.18, 20.13.
748 R. Burgess, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
people he saw as Franks, as was the case in his own day.⁷⁴⁹ Others have been more supportive of Gregory and doubt whether such a title is a result of carelessness, suggesting that Aegidius was involved in a power struggle with rivals for the position such as Childeric.⁷⁵⁰ There is a parallel to be drawn with Alaric’s adoption of the title of rex gothorum in the Balkans in the 390s. This has been discussed as a means of creating legitimacy for Alaric’s rule when his ‘army’ was thrown out of the Roman military system during his complex relationship with the western and eastern courts in the 390s.⁷⁵¹ The prominent role ‘Franks’ have whenever Aegidius is discussed is significant. Arguably, this reflects Aegidius’ recruitment of large numbers of Franks into his forces, which then evolved an ethnic identity under Aegidius’ leadership as he became more separate from the central government in Italy.⁷⁵²

Aegidius seems to have undertaken a significant amount of fighting, most notably the encounter with the Visigoths recorded for 463 by various sources in the Loire region.⁷⁵³ It is painfully difficult given the paucity of evidence to establish the nature of the force that Aegidius commanded. The answer falls between two stools: some would argue for a ‘Romanised’ force based on the ‘Gallic field army’ that had continued to survive the travails of the 5th century or one can see Aegidius as representing the culmination of barbarisation, commanding a war-band of Franks who had very little to do with any form of Roman army.⁷⁵⁴ What is crucial is that the contemporary sources, i.e. Hydatius and Priscus, despite their geographical distance, tend to stress that Aegidius is continuing to work within a recognisably Roman structure. This is clearly how things looked to observers from some distance away and undoubtedly this was the image that Aegidius and his supporters were trying to project, even though what was happening on the ground may have looked odd to a senator in Rome or Constantinople. This is where the similarity with Alaric also comes in useful, as he was undoubtedly also competing for a place within the existing Roman politico-military system and was being frustrated in this quest by being undermined at a politically

⁷⁵¹ T. Burns, Barbarians within the Gates of Rome (Bloomington, 1994), pp. 179-82.

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unstable court in Italy. In the confused accounts of the battle between Aegidius’ forces and those of Fredericus and a Visigoth army in the Orleans region, Hydatius’ version stresses that Aegidius was maintaining imperial policy of restricting Visigothic attempts to unilaterally expand their territories. He may well have looked to Constantinople for ultimate authority, though there would have been no practicality in putting himself under the eastern command structure. The record of him sending legates to the Vandal king should be seen as a witness to his capacity to act autonomously to undermine Ricimer and Libius Severus in Italy rather than him acting as an independent ruler.\footnote{Hydatius, 224 (465).}

What Aegidius demonstrates is the complexity of military identities in the context of the fragmentation of the western imperial structures. I would suggest that Aegidius continued to maintain a Roman army in a form that was identifiable to contemporaries – Priscus seems supportive of this, describing Aegidius as being in charge of a “large force” and stressing that he was “a fellow soldier of Majorian’s.”\footnote{Priscus, Blockley fr. 39.} Hydatius makes many other favourable comments about Aegidius, describing him as a “vir at fama commendatus et Deo bonis peribus complacens” (a man who both enjoyed an excellent reputation and was very pleasing to God because of his good works).\footnote{Hydatius, 214 (463).} Paulinus of Périgueux also praises his courage, good character and faith in his Life of St. Martin.\footnote{Paulinus Petricordis, V. S. Mart. VI. 111-2: “Illustrem virtute virum sed moribus almis plus clarum magnumque fide qua celsior exstat”.} One could argue these were simply comments on their piety, but to separate that from feelings of political solidarity is perhaps being too schematic.\footnote{Contra J. Harries, Sidonius Apollonaris and the Fall of Rome (Oxford, 1994) pp. 98-99.} The rhetorical schema outlined in chapter 1 is broad enough to encompass this.

In the aftermath of Majorian’s murder his legitimacy became more complex, and this explains the possibility of a hostile tradition amongst strict constitutionally minded figures. The \textit{Vita Lupicini} preserves a hostile view to Aegidius, arguing that he was seeking to undermine the \\textit{Comes} Agrippinus by accusing him of selling out to the Visigoths “\textit{barbaris procul dubio favere et subretione clandestine provincias a publica niteretur ditione desciscere}” (he was trying to grant favour to the barbarians and by secret plots to detach...
It is certainly telling that Sidonius fails to mention Aegidius by name in any of his letters, even though he does make allusions to him in his work, which implies that he excised Aegidius’ name when he published his works in the 470s. It is odd that the Gallic Chronicler of 511 replaces any mention of Aegidius by describing ‘Franci’ in his account of the battle at Orleans. However, as discussed above, the 511 Chronicle rarely discusses Roman military actions or milites. Rather than describing him as an independent ‘warlord’ who was merely using his title of magister as a shroud to his actions, I would suggest that, as far as he was able, Aegidius was trying to maintain a traditional Roman military identity. His problem was that the political and material context in which he operated. Comparing Aegidius with a Western military usurper in the 4th century such as Magnus Maximus is instructive. Maximus, having asserted his military control of Gaul in opposition to the regime he rebelled against declared himself Emperor. Aegidius never did this, which would have been the traditional response if he was leading a Roman army in the west, which highlights how far things had changed.

5.3 Childeric and Clovis

There has been extensive argument whether the Frankish kingdom emerged from pre-existing Roman structures; traditional Frankish practice; or as a result of entirely new structures created by the changing circumstances of the second half of the 5th century. The restrictions of the current study mean we must focus is whether any echoes of the ducatus or any other Roman military position can be traced in the second half of the 5th century. Discussions of the continuity of Roman military structures through the 5th century

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760 Vita Lupicini, 96.
762 Contra J. Harries op. cit., p. 141.
763 Most studies of the 5th century tend to be in general terms (as discussed in chapter 2). H-W Goetz, ‘Gens, Kings and Kingdoms’, in H-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut and W. Pohl, eds., Regina and Gentes: the relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World (Leiden, 2003), pp. 307 – 344 though some try to isolate specific elements: D. Frye, ‘Transformation and Tradition in the Merovingian Civitas,’ Nottingham Medieval Studies, 39, (1995), 1-11, argues that the civitas remained the main unit of administration under the Merovingians, and represented a development that arose out of an evolution of a more focused, local identity based on the civitas during the late Roman period. This was enhanced in the late 3rd century by the erection of walled circuits around the cities of northern Gaul, which provided an additional focus of protection. He also argues that there is a dislocation during the 6th century when the Franks rearmed the civitates and used them to further their conquests in Gaul.
have generally been quite general. The most direct written evidence is dominated by the rather opaque letter Bishop Remigius of Reims wrote to Clovis:

*Rumor ad nos magnum pervenit administrationem vos secundum Belgice (sic) suscepisse. Non est novum ut coepessit esse sicut parentes tui semper fuerunt.*

A strong report has come to us that you have taken over the administration of second *Belgica*. There is nothing new in that you now begin to be what your *parentes* were.

If this letter is to be taken literally, it could be reconstructed to mean that government of the province had survived in some significant form, and Clovis inherited this from his predecessors, which is presumed by most commentators to mean his father Childeric. Many historians accept this testimony as *prima facie* evidence that the provincial administration remained intact. Halsall has argued that the territory of *Belgica* II retained enough provincial and military administration to make it one basis for the “Roman” armies he argues continued to operate in the Loire valley in the 460s and 470s. Did *administratio* therefore have any formal (or semi-formal) meaning in this context? The question of survival of Roman administration in the north of Gaul is problematic, though many have argued that some aspects did survive. Remigius’ letter is highly stylised, though is

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764 B. Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organisation 481-751* (Minneosta, 1971), pp. 4 – 5, argues for the continued existence of Roman military institutions until Clovis’ reign, the use of which gave him advantage over his competitors, though he does not elucidates what these were in practice. Anderson develops this argument by suggesting that Clovis’ army emerges directly from the *laeti* colonies and *foederati* settlements in northern Gaul of the 4th century in T.S. Anderson, ‘Roman military colonies in Gaul, Salian Ethnogenesis and the forgotten meaning of *Pactus Legis Salicae 59.5*’, *Early Medieval Europe*, 4 (1995), 129 – 144.

765 MGH III Epistolae Austrasicae 2, p. 113, The text is erroneous in its transcription of *Belgicae Secundae*.

766 According to Lewis and Short (parenst) this term is quite general and could apply to parents but also of ancestors of generations preceding the present, and in rare instances after the Augustan period, in a more general sense of ‘relations’ or ‘kinsfolk’; it also has the meaning of a founder which would make more sense in a dynastic setting, which doesn’t seem to be the case here.


770 J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long Haired Kings* (London, 1962), pp. 8 – 9, argues that many of the legal and administrative practices of northern Gaul continued into the Merovingian period in terms of the long-term acculturation of the Franks to Roman practice and while legal expertise may have been found in south-western Gaul, he argues that the *Lex Salica* implies the continuance of vulgar law. “The Franks may well have misunderstood and failed to use much of what they found of government and administration in Gaul, but they certainly brought no alternative with them. Their rule was Roman derivative.” J. Wallace-Hadrill *op. cit.*, p. 9. The argument that Clovis wished to control Reims in particular because of its administrative expertise, economic strength and strategic position is highlighted by Noel Lazaro Delgado, *The grand testamentum of*
probably a set-piece rhetorical flourish on the nature of a good ruler. The question is what model he is using. Rouché is quite convinced that Remigius’ list of qualities is that of the perfect rector provinciae. Given Remigius’ position, there are plenty of biblical allusions that he could be using, depending on who the audience for the letter actually is (he may have sent copies to his episcopal colleagues – and may have been more concerned to please them than Clovis!) There are several potential objections to using Remigius’ letter in such a positivist way. Firstly, it is not clear how far the concept of provincia continued to be relevant in northern Gaul in the second half of the 5th century. Remigius, given his education, was writing in a self-consciously archaic manner and, much like his correspondent Sidonius, using his cultural heritage as a means of asserting the ecclesiastical power of himself and his aristocratic colleagues in the face of Clovis’ military strength. The amicable, almost paternalistic, language may disguise Remigius’ relative weakness relative to Clovis, an attitude which would emphasise the alien nature of the Frankish king to the Gallo-Roman élite.

A distinction was created between the civilian authority of a praeses and the military authority of a dux in a province, though the authority of a ducatus was linked to a frontier region (limes). One can presume that the office of praeses for Belgica II had fallen into abeyance, at the very latest, by the second half of the 5th century. Remigius could be hinting that Clovis had inherited another formal position or title, such as that of dux, from Childeric. The main problem with this argument is there is no direct evidence to support it! Indirectly, Gregory of Tours makes the interesting comment from his own researches into the origins of Frankish kingship that: “The question who was the first of the kings of the

Remigius of Reims: Its authenticity, juridical acta and bequeathed property (Minneapolis, 2011), pp. 15 – 21; H. Wolfram argues that Clovis must have received some education for Remigius’ letter to have any meaning which he uses to imply that there was some continuity of the educational system H. Wolfram, The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples (Berkeley, 1997), p. 198.

771 M. Rouché, Clovis (Paris, 1996), p. 392 – this argument is based principally on the line “praetorium tuum, omnibus omnibus pateatur ut nullus exinde tristis abscedat.” (That your praetorium (tribunal) will be open to all and that no-one returns from it disappointed). This Rouché argues shows that the concern was that Clovis should be an ideal judge.

772 Remigius’ education see Sidonius, Declatamiones “There is no oration by any man living today which your skill could not effortlessly surpass and outstrip” Ep. IX.7; Gregory of Tours, who seems to be relying on a lost vita Remigii makes a similar comment Libri Hist. II.31 describing him as a “bishop of immense learning and a scholar above everything else.”

773 Several scholars emphasise that Childeric was a “Roman general” e.g. H. Wolfram, The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples (Berkeley, 1997), p. 203; A. C. Murray Gregory of Tours: the Merovingians (2006), p. xxii says that Childeric was “associated with Roman and military episcopal authorities.”
Franks is disregarded by many writers. Though the history of Sulpicius Alexander tells much of them, still it does not name their first king, but says that they had dukes.” Sulpicius was writing in the late 4th century, so this moves out of the time frame, but implies Gregory sees a line of continuity between the two phases. There are several figures in the written sources with various Roman titles in the second half of the 5th century who operated in northern Gaul (e.g. the comes Paul and Aegidius, who is identified as both magister militum and comes). Most of the “Franks” we meet are given the title of rex. Clovis could not have been entirely in control of the province, a fact that seems to be underlined by the existence of other apparently independent rulers in the province, such as the rex Ragnachar in Cambrai. Childeric is only referred to in the sources as a rex.

There is traditionally a strong historiographical split between those that place stress on Childeric’s romanitas and those who emphasise his non-Roman, pagan identity; others equivocate and say he displays both. The only really contemporary source we have for Childeric is his burial. The post-processual approach favoured by Halsall and Effros does allow these rites to be read as a source about what Clovis was claiming. Since Chifflet’s discovery of the tomb in 1653, scholars have stressed how the burial uses Roman artefacts as a statement of his ‘imperial’ status, hence the references to “Roman general” that are continually used when modern scholars discuss Childeric. This would stress continuity in the way that militia had a strong rhetorical component which could be exploited to present one’s use of force as legitimate and within a Roman cultural framework. On the other hand, most scholars who stress the Roman models place them in Constantinople rather than with Rome, so already the connection with a cultural continuity through Roman traditions in Gaul is weak. Childeric’s sword has recently been recognised as a western military type. The horse burials revealed by Brulet in his excavations in the 1980s also showed that Childeric

774 Gregory of Tours, History, II.9.
775 Paul: Gregory of Tours, History, II.18; Aegidius Magister Militum, Gregory of Tours, HISTORY II.13, comes, Hydatius Chronicle 5.1.212; 5.2.214.
776 Gregory of Tours, History, II.42.
777 Gregory of Tours, History, II.12 [regnem super Francorum gentem]; II.18 (the Angers Annals section); Vita Genovefa, 26, “Childericus rex Francorum.” The inscription of the ring that was found in his presumed tomb at Tournai says CHILDERICUS REX.
was placed under an enormous, round tumulus.\textsuperscript{779} While stressing the ‘pagan’ connotations, these views have been pushed further forward by Kazanski and Perin.\textsuperscript{780} They argue, in an old fashioned culture-historical model, that both the tumulus and horse-burials show influences from Eastern Europe, and particularly the Huns. They cite evidence from Jordanes that Attila had a tumulus prepared for his own burial, before being interred secretly elsewhere. The authors suggest that the tumulus was a means by which large numbers of people could be brought into the rituals as a means of consolidating the heirs’ social position. The weakness of relying on the 6\textsuperscript{th} century testimony of Jordanes is noted, but as they point out, mounds devoid of burials are found in the Hungarian plain in the 5\textsuperscript{th} century. What the range of influences Kazanski and Périn show, even if ethnic labels need to be treated carefully is that Childeric (or Clovis) were busy creating a new military identity from a variety of sources. The fact they had to shows in a way that the ebb of Roman power at the end of the 4\textsuperscript{th} and early 5\textsuperscript{th} century didn’t instantly create a new model of military identity.

5.4 Conclusion

In the context of this investigation it seems very unlikely that any of these characters would have identified themselves with the \textit{Ducatus Belgicae} II at any point, though ultimately the written sources are not sufficient to make a definitive statement on this. It would seem logical in the absence of a civilian governor, a military commander with some form of official recognition operating in \textit{Belgica} II could have filled the administrative void left behind with the shrivelling up of central influence and taken over some civilian responsibilities: a parallel, in some ways, to the ‘militarisation’ of civilian government that Brown argues occurred in Byzantine administered Italy a century after the period under review here.\textsuperscript{781} During the 5\textsuperscript{th} century as imperial power retreated to Italy (arguably after Gratian’s move to Milan in 381), and the direct involvement in local affairs would have diminished it appears that change

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{780} P. Périn and M. Kazanski, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 35 – 36.
\textsuperscript{781} T. S. Brown, \textit{Gentlemen and officers: imperial administration and aristocratic power in Byzantine Italy, A.D. 554-800} (London, 1984), beyond the reliance on circumstantial parallels from the Mediterranean region 100 years either side of the period under focus.
\end{footnotesize}
came quite quickly and by Clovis’ accession, Roman military identities existed only as a literary *topos* in the educated minds of Sidonius and Remigius.
Chapter 4: Conclusions

This study has attempted to demonstrate that many of the approaches to the late Roman military presence in the provincial society of Belgica II have approached the evidence with too many a priori assumptions and that alternative interpretations which challenge conventional wisdom are both feasible and desirable. However, we must always acknowledge the fundamental difficulty when dealing with the late Roman military system: the surviving evidence is extremely complex and often opaque, and can easily support quite different interpretations.

4.1 Identity

‘Military identity’, as modern sociological theory has shown, was not eternal and unchanging but mutable and affected by the particular social context in which it operated. In the Roman world, this identity ranged from a rhetorical means of legitimising imperial rule through armed service, but also created an institutional framework within which a diverse group of individuals could share a series of common ideas and routines which helped create a sense of military identity. On the other hand, there were also local expressions of community within army units, and wherever milites found themselves. Gardner argues that these regional identities were particularly strong, and that there were clear differences between Gaul and Britain, but it may be that these differences have been exaggerated. Gardner probably overrates the ethnic (i.e. ‘Germanic’) dimension to Gallic military units, certainly in the 4th century, and possibly even in the first few decades of the 5th century. Further research needs to be done to understand the relationship between military identity and provincial cultures through the Empire as they underwent the transition from the 3rd to the 5th centuries. The focus on the army of the 2nd century as an ideal type is partially a stereotype we can already see developing in the Christian literature which increasingly appropriated the concept of militia for its own purposes. The 4th and 5th centuries should be seen as distinctive periods in their own right where military identity was refashioned between the twin anvils of tradition and socio-economic change rather than as representing a decline from an imaginary ‘golden age’.

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4.2 Integration

Crucially, the discourse of integration in Roman military studies seems a crude tool of analysis for our purposes. Soldiers did spend more time in cities, and across the landscape, in the 4th century onwards than in earlier periods, but that did not mean that they became part of the local community or developed growing interest in extending their own power and influence in local areas. Integration and separation are false dichotomies as both can apply simultaneously — identity is flexible enough for this. The evidence seems to suggest that when it comes to routines, ceremonies and the organisation of space, *milites* retained features that separated them from the diverse civilian community. A distinct military community existed, as it had done during the early Empire: a group of people with military attachments who retained dual identities, but who were part of a different world to ordinary civilians. Even when soldiers appear to be increasingly moved into urban areas (or settlements who retained some urban features) at the end of the 4th century, they retained a physical and mental separation from the non-military population. Establishing how distinctive *Belgica* II was compared with the rest of the western Empire requires further research.

4.3 Militarisation

‘Militarisation’ is a crude term that is often poorly defined and seeks to reduce a series of complex changes into a misleadingly simple process. The best evidence for a militarisation of the province arguably comes in the second half of the 3rd century, when financial collapse and political turmoil saw soldiers spread throughout the province in an attempt to reassert imperial authority, which was challenged by several groups, such as the *baguadae* and soldiers loyal to Carausius, who had quite different approaches in challenging the authority of the Tetrarchs, but could be argued to represent a similar phenomenon. The landscape did become more dominated by fortified structures but this happened gradually and was related to a series of longer-term changes in the provincial social and economic structures that had been occurring since the start of the 3rd century. Militarisation was not so much an increasing influence of soldiers over civilian affairs as the imperial government intervening more directly in provincial life. Again, this is easily exaggerated, as despite its increased manpower and physical presence in late Antiquity, the Roman Empire was a reactive rather
than a proactive entity. It was the relationship of the diverse groups of people found in Belgica II during the 4th and early 5th centuries to the imperial government that was crucially altered by the political crises of the period. After imperial influence diminished in the 5th century, northern Gaul moved in a different direction. The breakdown of the administrative and material structures that had maintained the military communities of Belgica II appears to have been particularly serious in the 5th century, and this in turn reveals why we find little evidence for soldiers in the province after this point. It seems likely therefore, that before long new identities were being created, but crucially were being fashioned out of the foundations of those that they replaced.

This thesis would argue that we should recognise two divergent trends in the late Roman military structures. There was a centralising, universal set of values, which competed with a localising trend that created very particular expressions of military identity. While the Emperors and their proclamations, edicts and reforms created a uniformity of practice this would not apply consistently across the Empire due to the limitations imposed by geographical variation. We can witness the emergence of regional variation in the local responses to issues of insecurity and a continued need for military force to maintain order. This should not be understood as a teleological development, where we begin from a clear unitary army structure that gradually fragmented, but as a continual cyclical process of fragmentation and reconstruction. This could happen on an Empire-wide scale (as under the Tetrarchs and Constantine) but also on a more restricted, local basis (as under Valentinian I). The wider political developments of the 5th century changed the dynamics of this evolutionary trend with the pace of change quickening dramatically as the century progressed. Sidonius Apollinaris recorded Majorian’s proclamation in Rome in 457 as the simultaneous act of the whole city: people, senators, soldiers.\(^783\) Even allowing for the deliberate anachronism in Sidonius’s writings, this phrase has a clear political implication that showed how the ‘Roman army’ was becoming the tool of historiography it remains today, as an idealised expression of a world that had vanished.

Future research should try and explore these issues in a wider context across the west, or explore the various topics raised here in more detail. Each aspect covered has only touched

\(^783\) Sidonius Apollinaris, Carmen, V.385: “Postquam ordine vobis ordo omnis regum dederat; plebs, curia, miles et college simul”.
the surface of understanding how the later Roman period relates to the *longue durée* of northern Gaul. The full understanding of the changing burial practices in northern Gaul and their relationship to changes in military structure remains a particular challenge, despite so much recent work, and possible provides the best evidence to allow a reconstruction of the dynamic processes of change we have outlined.
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Appendix 1: forts in *Belgica* II

C.1 “Litus Saxonicum”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/ Roman name</th>
<th>Periods of occupation</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Textual evidence</th>
<th>Archaeological Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shore Forts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aardenburg</strong></td>
<td>III final period of occupation late 3rd – early 4th century</td>
<td>Fort</td>
<td>3ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Numismatic data indicating there is a significant drop off at the end of the 3rd century.⁷⁸⁵ There is coinage from Constantine, Magnentius and period X (388 – 402).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abandoned early 4th century</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bruges</strong></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Fort (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coinage from Diocletian and some pottery found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oudenburg/Portu Epatiaci</strong></td>
<td>IVA c.260 - 270 IVB c.270 – 280 VA c.320 – 340 VB c. 370 – 400</td>
<td>Fort</td>
<td>2.4ha</td>
<td>ND. Occ. XXXVII.9 <em>Tribunus militum Neruiorum, Portu Epatiaci</em></td>
<td>IVA is dated by the large amount of Tetrician coinage (271 – 4).⁷⁸⁸ There are parallels in the stone construction of the fort with developments across the channel in the Shore forts in <em>Britannia</em> which are dated to the “260s onwards.”⁷⁸⁹ Pottery analysis has led to the belief that there was 2 phases of supply which are identified as IVA and IVB. There was also a large amount of pottery imported from Britain during the period IV, in terms of Black Burnished ware, which confirms the close links between</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the coin evidence & some wooden planks in the outside of the double well excavated in the southwest corner providing a cutting date of 319 – 322 it is speculated that the fort was reoccupied in the second quarter of the 4th century. The final phase is dated from several reconstructions – the internal part of the double well for example was constructed of wood which was cut in c. 379 – and the ‘military cemetery’.

The excavated south-west corner seems to reveal that there was a large stone bath building with a hypocaust that dominated the area. Towards the end of the 4th century the area was divided by wooden fences and a simple wooden building (possible a stable) was constructed. There was also a large oak basin, possibly for storing rain water.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Identified as possible location for</th>
<th>Late 3rd century – early 5th century?</th>
<th>Fort</th>
<th>ND. Occ. XXXVII.7 Equites Dalmatae, Marcis in litore Saxonico.</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marquise</td>
<td>Marcis by name evidence</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etaples*</td>
<td>Identified as possible site for Marcis by name evidence</td>
<td>Late 3rd century – early 5th century?</td>
<td>Fort</td>
<td>ND. Occ. XXXVII.8 Praefectus classis Sambricae, in loco Quartensi sive Hornensi</td>
<td>The medieval castle occupies a strategic position consistent with other fortifications sheltering in the estuary; roller stamped samian ware has been found and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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a small cemetery dating to the mid-4th century.793

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Periods of occupation</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Textual evidence</th>
<th>Archaeological Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Le Crottoy*</td>
<td>Late 3rd century – early 5th century?</td>
<td><strong>Fort</strong></td>
<td>ND. Occ. XXXVII.8 Praefectus classis Sambricae, in loco Quartensi siue Hornensi</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap Hornu*</td>
<td>Late 3rd century – early 5th century?</td>
<td><strong>Fort</strong></td>
<td>ND. Occ. XXXVII.8 Praefectus classis Sambricae, in loco Quartensi siue Hornensi</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2: the so-called “Limes Belgicus”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bavai – Tongres Road</th>
<th>Name/ Roman name</th>
<th>Periods of occupation</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Textual evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bavai1794            |                  | I c. 280 – c. 300     | **Fortress?**  | 2ha – 4ha | CIL XIII 395  
*Hic depositus in p(ace)*  
Lucinu(s) Scrinari(lus)  
bene merens/ D(omino) Hon(orio)  
Aug VI Cons(ule)  
Vixit Anno(s) XXXIII (Chi-rho monogram) |

There is intense disagreement over the precise status of Bavay in the late Empire and the role of the *castrum*. For some the whole site is indicative of a Roman fort. For others this is unsatisfactory. The most up to date assessment is that phase 1 saw a continued, small civilian population, while there was a change after the 370s and a military presence became clearer.795 This was found in the eastern ‘castrum’ where a construction was created in the late 4th century, and western half remained a civilian redoubt.

During the later 4th century there is coin evidence for reoccupation of the forum with a series of pits in the

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793 G. Sennequier and M. Tuffreau-Libre, ‘Le cimetière gallo-romain à inhumations (Bas-Empire) du château d’Étaples (Pas de Calais)’, *Latomus*, 36 (1977), 933 – 41.
| Givry | I c. 260 – c. 275  
|       | II c. 320 – c. 350  
| Watch tower | 0.14ha | The structure was built on a foundation of loose stones alternating with placed stone fixed without mortar. The suggestion is that the site was a monument, reused as a watchtower during the 3rd century.  
|        |        | Coinage seems to imply two phases: 34 coins from the Gallic Empire period (Gallienus – Tetricus II, with 7 imitations) and 5 from the Licinius – Constans/Constantius period, the latest being a 348-50 type Fel Temp Reparatio. A ditch next to the site also contains sculpted stone and material from the 4th century.  

| Morlanwelz | I c. 250 – 300  
|           | 0.16ha in total/  
|           | 0.057ha | Square building, with ditch and palisade, corresponding to a postal station. The

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>c. 260 – c. 280</th>
<th>Fortress – part of Limes Belgicus</th>
<th>0.72ha</th>
<th>2ha</th>
<th>ND Occ. V 246 Geminiacenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IIa</td>
<td>c. 300 – c. 320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIb</td>
<td>c. 330 – c. 360</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIc</td>
<td>c. 390 – c. 420</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liberchies is defined by a series of ditches and wooden palisades, which excavators seem to believe implies 3 stages. The first palisade was constructed after the abandonment of ditch I, as it is built on top, and was probably constructed simultaneously to the second ditch. A subsequent palisade is probably linked to ditch III. The dating is done with numismatics, with numerous Postumus coins found in the embankment of the ditch, implying an origin during the Gallic Empire. The largest number of coins date from Tetricius I, of which 127 were imitations, a number which dwarfs the total coinage. The discovery of imitation series of radiate coins implies an occupation until the early 4th century (41 coins in total). There are a handful of 4th century

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coins found on the surface across the complex. 802

A large fortified complex emerges 1400m to the west of the original fortification. The main structure is a quadrangular stone fortification (45 x 56.5m), with walls 2.8m high and circular towers. The interior of the fort has evidence for buildings constructed against the wall. The perimeter of the site is complex as there is evidence for a large ditch, which is interrupted on the north west side by a small palisaded ditch. There are two annexes to the fortification on the east side, which appear to be bath houses. On the west side there may be the remains of a wooden barracks structure.

There is considerable controversy over why there is such a large gap between the ditch and the fort structure. The best explanation seems to be that the enclosed structure was built before the stone fort was constructed, thus giving phase IIa and IIb.

The coinage is interesting of the 1081 coins 755 date from period V 803 (330 – 340). Again, the majority of these (472) are imitations. Period VI (340-48) has 178 coins (41 being imitations). There are small numbers of coins for later periods, with the last peak being period X (388 – 402) which has 52 coins (2 imitations) surviving.

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803 Following the chronological scheme laid out in *RIC* VIII.
3.3 Other fortifications in Belgica II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/ Roman name</th>
<th>Periods of occupation</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Textual evidence</th>
<th>Archaeological Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revelles</strong>&lt;sup&gt;804&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>I c. 260 – c. 275</td>
<td>Burgus</td>
<td>0.4ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 miles to the southwest of Amiens. The fortification replaced a large funerary monument alongside the main antique road to Rouen.&lt;sup&gt;805&lt;/sup&gt; The dating of the site comes from the 641 coins which all carry the effigy of the Gallic Emperors Postumus, Victorinus, Tetricius I and II which implies an occupation date of about 270. The site seems to be laid out in an orthogonal shape, estimated to be 70m x 65m, with a v-shaped ditch surrounding a set of internal structures. The entrance is protected by a <em>titulum</em> (19m in length). The current state of knowledge about internal buildings is vague, but there are a series of post-holes which could be huts or possibly extensions to a wall that would permit those inside a better vantage point (a <em>chemin de ronde</em> or suchlike).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Famars</strong>&lt;sup&gt;806&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>I c. 320 – 350? II c. 360 – c. 450?</td>
<td>Fortress</td>
<td>1.8ha – 2.2ha</td>
<td>ND Occ XLII <em>Fano Martis Belgicae Secundae Praefectus Laetorum Nerviorum</em></td>
<td>4 javelin heads were excavated between 2008 and 2012; dated to the end of the 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; or early 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; century. No concrete evidence of whether they are to be associated with hunting or with soldiers. Clotuche argues that they are found in a ‘civilian’ context and no other military objects have been found but doesn’t say which side of the argument he would take. A coat of mail in a leather bag was found in 2008 in a trench associated with a house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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dismantled in the early 4th century. Another contemporary trench revealed an ‘Alamannic’ fibule imitating the fibulae of the 3rd/4th centuries – which is identified as a ‘foederatus’ (on no basis whatsoever)!! Another fibula (early crossbow) was found which is dated 260 – 290 (?).

_Castrum – fibula_ Keller-Pröttel 2A (dated to 300 – 340); found in an oven, was dated to 323 and thus linked to the construction. Attest the role of official supervision of construction. Sword found in 19th century, attested to the type used in late Antiquity, however one can’t be more precise.

Role of the _castellum_ and its inhabitants are still largely unknown. Why was the site built when the rest of the city was dismantled? What was the relationship between Atrebates and Nervii? Why were the _laeti_ here, and what was the origin of these soldiers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kortrijk</th>
<th>Vicus Cortoriacum Cortoriacenses?</th>
<th>The fort has not been excavated yet, though excavations have identified the Late Imperial zone and a ditch. Coinage of Julian and Valens has been found.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Courtrai)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatel-Chéhéry (Ardennes)</td>
<td>Hillfort 2.5ha</td>
<td>J-P. Lemant identified that the site was fortified in the Late Empire and dominated habitation on the east slope. Large amounts of 4th century pottery are found on the site. 110 coins were found across the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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808
area – from Hadrian to 388 – 402 phase. Evenly spread across the 4th century with some imitations. (p. 251)
Large amount of pottery seems to have been produced at Chatel between end of the 4th and 5th centuries with Christian motifs rolled onto ceramic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Site Type</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omont (Ardennes)</td>
<td>4th/5th century</td>
<td>Hillfort</td>
<td>Position of a blocked spur (éperon barré) which had a castle built onto it in 883 led to the theory that there was a fort here. Several tombs from the 4th and 5th century were excavated here (using pottery) 9/10 being Argonne ware. 6 tombs from the Late Empire have been discovered of which 2 had weapons (tomb no. 3 has a knife and no. 10 an axe) – which leads to the laeti theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonne (Ardennes)</td>
<td>3rd century</td>
<td>Fort routier</td>
<td>Underneath the medieval motte was a fortification built during the 260s that controlled the Reims-Trier road.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Appendix 2 - cities

### 1. Civitas Capitals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Roman name)</th>
<th>Wall circuit (size)</th>
<th>Date Textual Evidence for the Late Roman period</th>
<th>Summary of archaeological evidence for the Late Roman period</th>
<th>Military Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amiens (Samarobriva/ Civitas Ambiani)</td>
<td>20ha</td>
<td>Mid-4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; century (c. 350)&lt;sup&gt;812&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Ammianus Marcellinus XV.11.10 Huic (Belgicae primae] adnexa secunda est Belgica, qua Ambiani sunt, urbs inter alia eminens, et Catelauni et Remi. Next to this [Belgica I] is Belgica Secunda, where the Ambiani are, whose city is the most eminent of all, and the Catalauni (Chalons-sur-Marne) and the Remi (Reims).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ammianus Marcellinus XXVII.8.1 Profectus itaque ab Ambianis, Treverosque festinans, nuntio percellitur [Valentinianus] gravi, qui Britannias indicabat barbarica conspiratione ad ultimum vexata inopiam This was why, having left Amiens and while he was hastening towards Trier, [Valentinian] was alarmed by a new message, which indicated that Britain had been brought to its knees by a barbarian conspiracy</td>
<td>Jerome Letter 123.14 Ad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>812</sup> This is based on the dendrochronological dating in L. Wozny, *Amiens, Saint-Germain, zone 1-zone 2 (80.021.017 AH), DFS de fouille de sauvetage, Amiens, SRA Picardie* (1996) l’îlot Saint-Germain. Trente-trois pieux ont été débités pendant l’hiver 340 et le printemps 341 et un pieu a été fabriqué dix ans plus tard. This challenges the traditional dating picture which is drawn from the coins found in earlier excavations dating to the late 3rd century: F. Vasselle, *L’enceinte urbaine du Bas-Empire de Samarobriva (Amiens, Somme). Description - Construction – Datation,* *Celticum,* 6 (1963), 323-342.

<sup>813</sup> B. Pichon, *op. cit.,* (2009), p.72.
Most savage tribes in countless numbers have overrun all parts of Gaul. The whole country between the Alps and the Pyrenees, between the Rhine and the Ocean, has been laid waste by hordes of Quadi, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alans, Gepids, Herules, Saxons, Burgundians, Allemanni and-alas! for the commonweal!-even Pannonians. The powerful city of Reims, the Ambiani, the Atrebatae, the Morini on the skirts of the world, Tournai, Speyer (?), and Strasbourg have fallen to Germany:

**Sulpicius Severus** *Vita S. Martini* III.1

Quodam itaque tempore, cum iam nihil praetor arma et simplicem militia vestem haberet, media hieme quae solito asperior inhorruerat, adeo ut plerosque vis alogoris extingueret

Internal use of the castrum can be seen in 3 areas, where evidence for what has been interpreted as a series of public enterprises were found:

- Rue Saint-Germain
- Halles du Befroi
- Forum

The second half of the 4th century saw the destruction of the forum site and its replacement by an important building used for metalworking, which has been suggested to have served as the *fabrica* mentioned in the *Notitia*.

Under Magnentius a mint was set up for a short time, probably because of Magnentius’ association with the city. The city seems to have retained significance in the textual evidence, as it was occasionally an imperial centre: this is best documented under Valentinian, and thus the urban fabric would have had to have been sufficient to maintain the *comitatus*.

---

obvium habet in porta
Ambianensium civitatis
pauperem nudum.

Panegyricus Constantio
Caesari dictus IV.21.1 (AD
297)
Ita nunc per victorias tuas,
Constanti Caesar invicte,
quidquid infrequens
Ambiano et Bellowaco et
Tricassino solo
Lingonicoque restabat,
barbaro cultore revirescit.
“Whatever land remained
abandoned in the territory
of the Ambiani, Bellovaci,
Tricasses and Lingones
turns green again under
cultivation by the
barbarian.”

Notitia Dignitatum Occ.
IX.39
(Fabricae infrascriptae)
Ambianensis spatharia et
scutaria

Notitia Dignitatum Occ.
XLII.67 Praefectus
Sarmatarum gentilium
inter Remos et Ambianos
provinciae Belgicae
Secundae.

CIL XIII 3492
D(is) [M(anibus) E(t)]
M(emoriae)/ ... Ianuarius
imagin(if)er) N(umeri) Ursarinis(sium) Cives/
[S]equan(i) vix(it) annos/
[...XX]VIII Severianus
frat(eri)/ Memori(ian) posuit.

To the Manes and the
memory of Ianuarius,
imaginifer, of the regiment
of Ursarienses, citizen of
the Sequani who lived
29(?) years. Severianus, his
brother, raised this
memorial.

CIL XIII 3493
Val(eri)us Durio Circi(or)
N(umeri)
Catafr(actorum) vix(it) an(nos) XXX Valerius Durio, Circitor of the Cataphract Regiment lived for 30 years

CIL XIII 3494
D(is) M(anibus) E(t)
M(emoriae) Val(erius)
Iustus/ E(ques?) vix(it)
ann(os) XXXI scola/
provincialum in/ [s]tituit
To the Manes and the memory of Valerius Iustus, cavalryman, who lived 31 years. The Schola of the Provincials installed this.

CIL XIII 3495
[D(is)] M(anibus)/ E(t)
M(emoriae) Val(erius)
Zurdiginiu(s)/ De(curio)
Catafr(actorium?)
To the Manes and the memory of Valerius Zurdiginius(s), Decurion of Cataphracts(?)

Arras**816 (Nemetacum/ Civitas Atrebatum)**

| 8ha | End of 3rd century |

Notitia Dignitatum Occ. XLII.40 Praefectus laetorum Batavorum Nemetacensium Atrabatis Belgicae secundae

The main excavation work has been at the Baudimont area of the city which has revealed several layers of occupation covering the whole imperial period. This evidence

The “Germanic sanctuary”

The most interesting site which may illustrate the complex relationship between the military and civilian population is at Arras. At some point around 375 a sanctuary site, which from the surviving cult objects and statuary seems to have been dedicated to Attis and Cybele, was destroyed.817

The “Theodosian” barracks818 are a very important set

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In the next few years a new sanctuary was constructed, based on a rectangular pit measuring 3.25m by 2.6m with a depth of 1.4m. A small wall, 0.4m high, based on a foundation of chalk and packed tiles enclosed the pit. Postholes show that a shelter was erected over the pit in a second phase of construction, soon after the first. Several other constructions appear during the first phase – flat hearths, ditches, a channel and a rectangular structure (2.2m by 0.8m). Several other hearths and ditches were added during a second phase, but the stratigraphy hints at only a short period of time between the two phases.

Various deposits were found across the site. The principal pit produced miscellaneous items such as a bowl, nails and various ceramics. Two human skulls were found placed upside down in the middle of the pit. The first was of a child, estimated at 5 years old, with a cow rib and limestone block wedged against it. The second was an adult, between 20 and 40 years of age, and was placed in a wreath of bronze that was encircled with iron that also contained traces of perishable tissue. The partial skull of a third individual, a child of around 7 years, was placed between the other skulls. The jawbone of a very young infant (between 1 – 2 years) lay on one side. A femur and a rib complete the list of human remains from this pit. The systematic disappearance of mandibles and cervical vertebrae from the skulls attest a post-mortem manipulation of the bodies for ritual deposition. Another smaller pit in the southwest of the complex contained the skeleton of a young girl (minus her skull) in her early teens, as well as other articles similar to the

of evidence for military occupation in a late Roman urban context. The name is due to an attribution of their construction to the aftermath of the defeat of Magnus Maximus by the excavator, Alain Jacques, but this is speculative.

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principal pit – ceramics, tiles and a harness pendant. The absence of the cervical vertebrae and mandibles implied to the excavators an intermediary stage between exhumation and secondary deposition. Traces of organic material (wood and other tissues) were found the main pit, but unfortunately they did not remain in a state where the original deposit could be understood. A large variety of deposits were found in the other pits across the site, including human and animal remains. The majority of these are pork (62%) but there are traces of other meats such as beef, chicken and shellfish. Traces of butcher cuts and signs of cooking indicate that these may have been consumed on the site, possibly as part of the rituals attached to the site.

“Theodosian Barracks”

These were constructed after the destruction of the sanctuary. In the late 380s/390s an intervallum of about 15m was created between the city wall and the new buildings. Building A was rectangular and measured 42m by 7.25m, being divided into a series of small rooms. Material from a rubbish dump attached to the site contained spear and javelin heads, an iron arrow with three flights, a fighting axe as well as various decorative items made from bronze. In addition the dump produced 40 pairs of studded, adult shoes, numerous ceramics and 600 bronze coins. Food remains contained large amounts of meat (beef and mutton) which are consistent with a military presence. The buildings are identified by the excavators as barracks, containing contubernia, with a papillo (common room) and an arms store. There is a second period of occupation in this stage, identified by the demolition of the room at the north end of barrack block A. This was replaced by an
oven, used for baking bread, protected by a post-built shed (10m x 9m). The internal structure of the buildings was affected, with partitions dividing the rooms into smaller units, dotted with rectangular pits and silos. The internal structure of the buildings was also affected, with partitions dividing the rooms into smaller units, dotted with rectangular pits and silos. Given the remains of amphorae and dolia in these pits these were probably for storing foodstuffs. Finds from this period consist of many objects that suggest a female presence – bronze and silver rings, gold earrings, jet black bracelets and bronze brooches. A military occupation is still indicated by finds of a spur, buckles, daggers and lead plumbatae. Spears, pommels and bronze decorations are consistent with cavalry soldiers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beauvais</th>
<th>10.7ha</th>
<th>Early 4th century</th>
<th>Panegyricus Constantio Caesari dictus</th>
<th>Very little is known about the material remains of the town during the late imperial period.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Caesaro magus/ Civitas Bellacorum)</td>
<td>&amp; ditch</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ita nunc per victorias tuas, Constanti Caesar invicte, quidquid infrequens Ambiano et Bellovaco et Tricassino solo Lingonicoque restabat, barbaro cultore revirescit.</em> (IV.21.1 (AD 297)).</td>
<td>North cemetery revealed a large number of 4th century graves with no military elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Notitia Galliarum VI</em></td>
<td>Cemetery found in north-east dates from 3rd &amp; 4th centuries which has few grave goods and distinguishing features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There are some indications of continued use of buildings within the castrum and some indications of continued use of suburban occupation too. Recent excavations on Rue Nully have found evidence of quite intensive occupation in the Late Empire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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821 G-P. Woimant op. cit., pp. 147 – 48; 3 levels of large blocks with bonded petit appareil.
level, with carefully constructed structures made up or re-employed *spolia* and chalk. In the west of the site a room with under floor heating was discovered. There was also a large amount of pottery found. Sadly there doesn’t seem to be any precise chronological information yet on this excavation.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boulogne 824 (Bononia – Gesoriocorum/civitas bononium)</th>
<th>12.6ha</th>
<th>Late 3rd century.</th>
<th>Boulogne seems to have remained as a major naval and military base during the late Empire. The settlement seems to have been based around the upper town citadel in the 4th century. Two phases of barracks have been found that date to the 4th and 5th centuries. The first barrack phase conform to normal Roman standards, but the last phase is more irregular, with Seillier arguing the hand turned pottery meaning that it was occupied by a ‘federate’ unit.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cambrai 825 (Camaracum/Civitas Camaracensium) | 4.3ha (?) 827 | (?) | Notitia Galliarum “Civitas Camaracensium” shows that Cambrai had replaced Bavai as the Civitas Capital at some point in the 4th century  
Gregory of Tours *Historia Francorum* 2.9 (Clodio)  
Gregory of Tours *Historia Francorum* 2.42 (Ragnachar)  
Very little is known about the material remains of the town. Excavations have produced late Roman coins and relatively large amounts of late pottery - particularly Argonne ware. Excavations at the lycée Fénelon have revealed compacted rubble and levelled ground which may have been the ancient *castrum*.  
A Frankish leader Clodio seems to have established some control over the city in the mid-5th century. In the early 6th century Ragnacharius a Frankish rival to Clovis apparently possessed a kingdom that was based on Cambrai. This implies that the city had some form of military |

826 Cambrai replaced Bavai as the civitas capital and the civitas changed its name from Civitas Nerviorum to Civitas Camaracensium (see *Notitia Galliarum*)  
827 This is a hypothetical estimate devised by M. Rouché, ‘Topographie historique de Cambrai durant le haut Moyen Age (Ve – Xie siècle)’, *Revue du Nord*, 58 (1976), 339 – 348, based on no physical evidence whatsoever (R. Delmaire, *Le Nord: Carte Archéologique de la Gaule* (Paris, 1996), p. 156. The main reason for believing that there was an *enceinte* is the literary evidence from Gregory of Tours who says that Chilperic I took refuge at Cambrai while fighting Gontran (Gregory of Tours *Historia Francorum* 6.41) while a later church is referred to as being extra muros (Balderic Chronicle of Arras and Cambrai 1.64). This isn’t particularly convincing however.  
Vermand  
**829**  
( Augusta/ Civitas Vermandu ensium)

| Vermand  | 16 – 20 ha | Late 3rd/4th century^830 | None | Oppidum wall which seems to date in origin to the 1st century BC (16 – 20 ha) – there seems to have been some large reused blocks placed into service in the wall which may have been part of the late Roman circuit. Very little is known of internal structures but there is a continuity of settlement in houses occupied in Rue des Troupes.  
831  
The cemeteries are given a date for the second half of the 4th century.  
Six cemetery groups with several military burials. The most prominent is “Le tomb de chef,” the precise nature of which has caused considerable debate.  
832  
There was a large civilian population too: Collart estimates 20% of the population were involved with the garrison.  
833  
Collart compares the site with Buzenol and Jemelle in Belgica I.

| Tournai | 12 – 15 ha^835 | Late 3rd/early | Notitia Galliarum VI | There seems to be a considerable population in Tournai during the | The Childeric tomb in the late 5th century.

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830 This dating is entirely hypothetical as the enceinte is so poorly understood. It could very well be that the structure surrounding the city as it is dates back to the La Tène period and it was maintained by later settlements see B. Pichon, ibid., pp. 480 – 82.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m/ Civitas Turnacensium</th>
<th>4th century</th>
<th>civitas capital in the 3rd/4th century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notitia Dignitatum Occ.XI.57</td>
<td>Procurator gynaecii Tornacensis, Belgicae Secundae</td>
<td>The procurator of the weaving-house at Tournai Belgica secunda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notitia Dignitatum XXVIII.15</td>
<td>Comes litoris Saxonic per Britanniam proaepositus Numerus Turnacensium Lemanis</td>
<td>Jerome Letter 123 (See entry in Amiens above)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reims (Durocortorum/Civitas Remorum)  
55ha  
c. 330 - 350  
Notitia Dignitatum Occ. IX.36 (Fabriciae infrascriptae) Remensis spatharia  
Notitia Dignitatum Occ. XI.34 Praepositus thesaurorum  
Several sites in Reims seem to hint at problems in the late 3rd century as almost a dozen sites give evidence of abandonment and/or destruction in the second half of the 3rd century.  
First half of the 4th century sees a late Roman period if the cemeteries are taken into account. There is also some large scale urban construction work in the Saint-Pierre area which is dated to the Constantinian period. There is also evidence of continued occupation in this area during the 5th century where evidence of artisan activity is mixed in with the ‘dark earth’ level.  
Excavations have also revealed developments in the cathedral area also have produced evidence for building activity in the late 3rd to the 5th century. A series of building reorganisations in the 4th and 5th century are clear in a domus which seems to have been turned into a basilica in the 5th century. There is also another building here which was reorganised several times but in the mid-4th century this included a phase of being used as a bath house, and an adjacent room had a hypocaust.  
St. Brice has shown some material indications (pottery and coinage) of being occupied in the 4th century but there is little precise information on the state of internal organisation beyond that.  
There is some evidence for a military occupation in the sector the old sanctuary around 250 – 275, but this seems very short as the

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835 The full extent of the circuit is unknown as only fragments have been excavated e.g. at La Loucherie though there is no doubt that there was actually an enceinte see R. Brulet, ‘Tournai et le genèse du Haut Moyen Âge’, in L. Verslype, ed., op. cit. (2007), p. 25; Gregory of Tours describes Chilperic taking refuge there with his wife and children in 573 (as at St Quentin) Historia Francorum, IV.50.  
836 R. Brulet, La Gaule Septentrionale au Bas-Empire (Trier, 1990), p. 98.  
837 Based in Lympne in Britain under the command of the Count of the Saxon Shore.  
840 It seems fairly clear that the city wall was constructed under Constantine – as construction was preceded by a destruction of pre-existing buildings and money from 310 – 320 was found in this destruction layer as well as Argonne ware R. Chossenot, A. Estéban and R. Neiss, op. cit. (2010), p. 94.  
Remorum
Treasury at Reims
*Notitia Dignitatum Occ.*
XI.56
Procurator gynaecii
Remensis, Belgicae Secundae
The procurator of the weaving-house at Reims in Belgica Secunda

*Notitia Dignitatum Occ.*
XI.76
Praepositus
branbaricariorum sive argentariorum Remensium

*Ammianus Marcellinus*;
XV.2.8; XVII.2.1 (Julian assembles his forces at Reims in 356 & 357)

*Ammianus Marcellinus*;
XXVI.5.14; XXVII.2.1 – 10
(Valentinian mobilises an army at Reims in 366 – 67)

*Jerome Letter 123*
(Quoted above)

period of calm and urban vitality in Reims – the best sign of this being the *enceinte*, which covered an impressive size in comparison to other cities in the province, and parallels in some ways the Augustan wall foundations. Two triumphal arches were incorporated into the wall as gates (*la Porte de Mars & la Porte de Bazée*) probably for aesthetic reasons too as their decorative features were maintained.

Many finds in the 19th century (especially glassware) imply that the city was an important centre of production, which is already indicated by the number of imperial production centres based at the city according to the *Notitia*.

The wall enclosed the city but there is evidence of continued occupation of areas inside the city walls. The most striking are the baths which were excavated again in the cathedral area between 1993 and 1995 which revealed continuity of function between the 1st and 4th centuries, with a series of refurbishments, the most spectacular being the Constantinian refoundation (CIL XIII.3255). This was eventually incorporated into the ecclesiastical foundations of the 5th century. Coinage evidence also shows that the aqueduct was still working during the second half of the 4th century.

Some speculation that the forum retained a monumental function during the 4th century, and contained the palace of the *praeses*, which later became part of the ecclesiastical complex. Identifications of the *palatium* mentioned in later documents for the Merovingian era as well have been made in the documentary sources, but there is little positive archaeological support for this though some remains found underneath the foundations of the nave in 1997.

archaeological artefacts are limited.

There is little evidence of any permanent occupation by soldiers.
Outside the walls the former monumental structures seem to have been used as a quarry, but there are enough finds to indicate a persistence in suburban use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Quentin</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassel (Castellum Menapiorum)</td>
<td>Late 3rd century?</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>The city’s importance seems to have derived from its proximity to salt flats, and when the sea levels increased in the 3rd century (Dunkirk Marine Transgression) this probably explains its subsequent loss of importance. The civitas capital seems to have moved to Tournai during the 4th century – see Notitia Galliarum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soissons (Augusta/ Civitas Suesionis)</td>
<td>Unknown date 3rd century (CAG, 456)</td>
<td>13ha</td>
<td>Wall: Excavated sections have revealed traditional 3rd/4th century wall structures of recycled monumental masonry (456 - 457) c. 100 ha in Early Empire 4th century burial in Soissons (coins from Postumus, Licinius &amp; Constantine) CAG 02, 451 1897 – 1911 excavations Longues Raies found in a large cemetery dating from 1st - 4th centuries (500 inhumations) belt buckle set; bronze crossbow brooches (2); Sarcophagi found in 1970 revealed bronze coin of Constantine II and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
short & long swords with belt-buckle dated to the 8th century – coin misleading. Little is known of the city in the 4th and 5th centuries archaeologically.

The urban organisation of the interior of the castrum is still detectable by a certain permanence, through analysis of the finds by the ancient road network. Unfortunately no building has yet been identified as no excavation has been carried out in the intra-muros zone on account of the intensely built up area.

| Therouanne 848 (Civitas Morinorum) | 849 | Jerome Letter 123 (Quoted above) | Some evidence for destruction at the end of the 2nd century and the end of the 4th century. There is very little evidence for a castrum. Some archaeologists have claimed to have found remains in the cathedral sector but these have not proved uncontroversial.

| Chalons-sur-Marne 850 (Catelounos/ civitas Catuellorum) | Circuit wall seems to have been made of earth 851 | No evidence for the city wall | Ammianus Notitia Galliarum 852 NB the early city is known very poorly in any detail, but the finds from the Late Empire outnumber/ are more important than the early period. | CIL XIII 3457 Esperandieu (1913) no. 3738 D(is) M(anibus)/Furius Antonius circ((itor) n(umeri) Dal(matarum) vixit (a)nnos XXVI (?) dies XV/ h(oras) III memorian (sic)/ ei coll(egium) (?) eius possuit (denariorum) V mil(ibus de suo denaria XXXVIIIICCC)

CIL XIII 3458 Esperandieu no. 3744 Plaianus equis/ in |

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849 There have been some claims that the late Roman rampart has been detected, but this has been disputed.
The only military evidence are the two epitaphs which are 3rd century. CAG 51/1 (Marne), 291 argues this represents evidence for a garrison, but I’m not sure about that.

Cruciform brooch found in 1879-80 in a tomb (CAG, 311)

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### 2. Secondary urban settlements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Roman name)</th>
<th>Wall circuit (size)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Textual Evidence</th>
<th>Archaeological evidence</th>
<th>Military Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mouzon (Ardennes)</td>
<td>Castrum (small site of about 12ha in early Empire)</td>
<td>c.370s</td>
<td>Notitia Dignitatum Occ. VII.105 Musmangenses (legio comitatenses) Vie de Saint Suzanne talks about a military officer in the town in 420</td>
<td>Sanctuary (fanum) continued to be used throughout the period. Dating based on wooden posts built into the foundations found in 1992 (2.5m wide). Dendrochronology dates</td>
<td>Montfort – fortification de hauteur &amp; the association with the Musmangenses are the main military forms of evidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The site to 367 – 68 based on 14 oaks and a maple tree. This parallels developments at Maastricht. Ceramics date from end of the 4th century to the 6th century. Coins found include Constantine II Caesar (330 – 335) and Constans (344).

There the site continued to be an important settlement into the Carolingian period and beyond.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noyon (Noviomagus)</th>
<th>2.5ha</th>
<th>End of 3rd/early 4th century</th>
<th>Notitia Dignitatum Occ. XLII.41 Praefectus laetorum Batavorum Contragensium Noviomago Belgicae Secundae</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Castrum had four gates and towers. Walls formed in a similar way to other cities – reemployed sculptural attachments with the rubble mortar interior and faced with petit appareil, with lines of brick tiles every 3.5m or so. No dating information available.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A hypocaust situated in the interior of the castrum was partially excavated in the rue des Deux-Bornes in 1980 which appears to have been used until the start of the 4th century.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside of the castrum there is a break in occupation and organisation, as well as inside. At excavations in the interior at l’Îlot des Deux-Bornes remains of temporary buildings have been found dating to the 4th and 5th centuries. There is also evidence of metalwork taking place amongst some of the</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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857 Le mur s'apparente aux autres remparts urbains gallo-romains: élévation en maçonnerie de blocage parementée de moellons carrés de petit appareil, avec des arases intermédiaires de tuiles; puissantes fondations de grands blocs calcaire de réemploi. (Desachy, p. 172)

858 This is done by comparing the walls with Beauvais and the other walls in the south of Belgica II – there is no direct dating evidence.
structures of the Early Empire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Later Developments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laon (Aisne)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Very little evidence here at all for Late Empire though there is some evidence of occupation and later developments in the Early Middle Ages indicate that there was a fortification here in the upper city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavay</td>
<td>2ha – 4ha</td>
<td>I c. 280 – c. 300 II c. 360 – 380 III? c. 380 – c. 430</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>There is a large amount of evidence that the outer suburbs of the city had already been abandoned by the end of the 2nd century and during the early 3rd century. Excavations have shown buildings quite near the forum (e.g. in those at the Maison de la Rétraite) being systematically dismantled in the early 3rd century. There is little evidence for destruction at the end of the 3rd century despite earlier theories explaining the erection of the castrum as a response to the barbarian invasions. In fact there are a large number of coins found at the site, including treasures, dating to the last few decades of the 3rd century and the 4th century. This shows that ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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861 F. Loridant, ibid., p. 77.  
863 R. Delmaire, ibid., pp. 69 – 71: the treasures include: one found at Rue Jordanez in 1952 was made up of 22 denarii and 6637 antoninians dating from Gordian III to 287/90; a treasure of 19 Constantinian nummi was found in 1940 (but only 19 have been studied) and one with coins from the late 3rd and imitations from the mid – late 4th century.
the castrum did not lead to the abandonment of the city completely. There is also a large amount of Argonne ware pottery still found extra muros and the coinage continues to be quite numerous until the Valentinianic period when it begins a marked decline, finishing with some coins in the late 4th century (and a gold Constantine III coin) though the provenance is unknown, and Delmaire doubts the attribution to Bavay. 

The complex chronology of the site has been the source of considerable debated. After excavations in the 1970s and 1980s, Carmelez argued that there were 3 phases of construction: an initial ditch and blocking of the forum structure; this was followed by the first wall at the end of the 3rd century and then a second wall in the later Constantinian period. Subsequent excavation lead to this theory being abandoned and the evidence now seems to indicate that the ditch and filling in of the forum walls was actually the preparation stage for the erection of the first wall. A ditch (8.5m wide x 3.5m deep) was dug 10m in front of the wall. During the second phase (the first half of the 4th century) the 11 crossbow brooches have been found. 

There is some evidence for wooden structures being built here which could be seen as barracks which seem to have been constructed and occupied until the end of the century. ‘Germanic’ pottery and some cemeteries have been argued to testify to a military presence. 

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ditch was filled up and the new wall was constructed to replace, or double up on, the first one. This wall was constructed in a methodical manner, with petit appareil and a tile brick course, in the manner of many late Roman fortification walls. The dating has shifted too on the basis of coin and pottery finds in the foundation trenches of the different walls. Now the first phase has a terminus post quem of 280, and the second phase based the Alzey pottery that doesn’t appear in other north-western cities until after the 350s, is put into the Valentinian period.667

Within the walls of the castrum there are elements of hypocausts and other remnants that have been found.668

### Famars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.8ha – 2.2ha</th>
<th>I c. 320 – 350?</th>
<th>Notitia Dignitatum Occ. XLII.39 Praefectus laetorum Nerviorum Fano Martis Belgiae secundae</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The hypothesis that it was part of the Cologne – Bavay – Boulogne road network is moot. The site linked Bavay to Cambrai which could explain its link with the Laeti.674 Its position on the road network would make it strategically useful too.

Clotuche argues that they are found in a ‘civilian’ context and no other military objects have been found but doesn’t say

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and suggests they should be seen as a similar site. Same surface area/same dates of construction etc.

The terminus post quem for the site is 320 based on the dating of buildings that were dismantled for the new construction. There was a defensive ditch dug earlier apparently.

The site has a pentagon structure, with a series of defensive ditches. There were apparently two states of construction.

Graves of the 5th century were found 60m away from the fortification which are dated to the 5th century on the grounds that there were no grave goods. This is problematic (they could be Carolingian).

The bath house and temples, as well as other workshops, were all dismantled and the stonework used in the fortification wall. 36000m² of material was used – 1.4m blocks. About 320 enormous ovens were constructed to cook the material.

First phase saw the wall constructed 1m wide, and the dating is brought from coins in a hoard found in one of the ovens which shows 323 as the terminus post quem. Walls of the bath house are used in this phase. Only found on the northern and western sides. Towers were hollow. I ditch was linked to the first phase.

Second phase dates after 353 thanks to a coin of Magnentius. The wall was which side of the argument he would take.

A coat of mail in a leather bag was found in 2008 in a trench associated with a house dismantled in the early 4th century. Another contemporary trench revealed an ‘Alamannic’ fibule imitating the fibulae of the 3rd/4th centuries – which is identified as a ‘fœderatus’ (on no basis whatsoever)!! Another fibula (early crossbow) was found which is dated 260 – 290 (?).

Castrum – fibula Keller-Pröttel 2A (dated to 300 – 340); found in an oven, was dated to 323 and thus linked to the construction. Attests the role of official supervision of construction. Sword found in 19th century, attested to the type used in Late Antiquity, however one can’t be more precise.

Role of the castellum and its inhabitants are still largely unknown. Why was the site built when the rest of the city was dismantled? What was the relationship between Atrebates and Nervii? Why were the laeti here, and what was the origin of these soldiers?
strengthened and broadened to 2.3m. Towers were filled. 2 ditches linked to this phase.

There are lots of issues in identifying the series of levels here.

Coin finds:

Coin finds pre-excavation:
Theodosius I – Valentinian III (solidus)

Found *inter-muros*:
Gallienus – Constantine
Found outside the walls:
Gallienus – Valentinian I

Pottery found by the entrance dates from 350 – 500; e.g. Metz phase 2 (until AD 450) and Brulet 424 (AD 400 – 500)
Appendix 3 – Gravestones from Amiens

Figure 1 CIL 3493 Valerius Durio
Figure 2 CIL 3495 Valerius Zurdignius
Figure 3 CIL 3494 Valerius Iustus