DRUNGUS, ΔΡΟΥΓΓΟΣ, AND ΔΡΟΥΓΓΙΣΤΙ: A GALLICISM AND CONTINUITY IN LATE ROMAN CAVALRY TACTICS

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THIS PAPER IS A STUDY OF CONTINUITY of both practice and terminology within the best-attested institution of the Roman world, the Roman army, and it utilises certain texts whose wider historical significance is seldom recognised. Roman military historians have long accepted Vegetius' late fourth-century *Epitoma rei militaris* as a potential source of evidence for the Roman army of the Principate or even the late Republic, albeit with careful consideration of every passage in terms of the author's sources, methodology, and purpose. Later technical military works dating to the sixth century, however, notably the *Strategicon* of the Emperor Maurice, are conventionally regarded as being beyond the pale of evidential validity for earlier Roman practices. This is due to a great extent to the traditional characterization of such late antique military treatises as "Byzantine." As a consequence they have tended to receive only the detailed attention of scholars seeking the origin of the subsequent Byzantine tradition, while their status as the culminating documents of Roman military science has been largely ignored. The importance of the *Strategicon* in particular for Roman historians lies in the fact that it is in large part a compendium of earlier documentary material, indeed precisely the sort of non-literary texts or informal writings that are rarely preserved, whose unprecedented vernacular idiom and uniquely technical perspective have the potential to cast much light on the earlier Roman army. Several recent studies have shown that the *Strategicon* exhibits a very considerable degree of continuity in content and terminology with military methods dating back to at least the third century A.D., and in some instances much earlier.[1] This paper offers a further "case study" partly on account of its intrinsic historical and etymological interest, and partly by way of illustration of the value of this later material in elucidating earlier practices.

The word *drungus* is first attested in the late fourth century, while the Hellenized δροῦγγος first appears in the early fifth century. The cognate adverb δρουγγιστί is attested from the late sixth century. Although modern studies of late Roman (and Byzantine) armies have frequently noted these terms, comments in this modern literature often conflict, in part a reflection of the considerable ambiguity in their usage in contemporary texts. The only previous study to concern itself with *drungus*/δροῦγγος was a monograph by Kulakovskii published in 1902, though he was less interested in the origins and contemporary application of *drungus* than in the later and varied development of the Byzantine office of δρουγγάριος, and

[1] See Speidel 2000; Rance 2000 and 2004.

he omitted discussion of the term δρουγγιστί altogether.[2] *Drungus*, δροῦγγος, and δρουγγιστί are usually thought to designate a new and specific tactical formation developed uniquely by the late Roman cavalry, apparently under "barbarian" or specifically "Germanic" influence, and characterized as a loose, irregular grouping suitable for skirmishing and raiding. This paper examines the different and changing meanings of *drungus*/δροῦγγος in late Roman texts, and, insofar as they illuminate our reading of the latter, briefly extends this treatment to middle Byzantine texts. It will examine the disputed etymological origins and development of this term; attempt to account for its variant usage, even within the same text; and relate these variations to the different literary registers—official, technical, vernacular, generic—in which it was used. It will also attempt to define the tactical deployment described by the phrase [ἡ τάξις] δρουγγιστί, hitherto misunderstood, and to establish whether the appearance of this novel terminology necessarily implies late Roman tactical innovation.

DRUNGUS IN LATIN SOURCES AND ITS ETYMOLOGY

The word *drungus* first appears in Vegetius' *Epitoma rei militaris*, for which a late fourth-century date is preferred here.[3] Vegetius purposefully omits the whole subject of cavalry from his treatise, since "current practice suffices," and this branch of the contemporary Roman army is therefore not included in his selective reforming programme.[4] He cannot ignore cavalry altogether in his broader treatment of battle tactics, however, and it is in this context that he mentions *drungi*. In a brief treatment of cavalry deployment (3.16, *De equitibus ordinandis*), Vegetius describes the traditional dispositions of cavalry in the Roman battle line, with the heavy cavalry (*fortioribus equitibus*) protecting the flanks of the infantry, while at the extremities of the battle line "the enemy's flanks are to be overwhelmed or disordered by the swifter and lighter cavalry" (*a velocioribus atque expeditis hostium cornua superfundenda atque turbanda*). Vegetius then remarks that, "the general should know against which *drungi*, that is groups, of enemy he ought to position which of (his) cavalry" (*scire dux debet contra quos drungos, hoc est globos, hostium quos equites oporteat poni*); Vegetius means simply that the general should choose an appropriate troop type to counter enemy attacks. From this passage it is apparent that *drungus* is another word for *globus*. The latter word appears in the following chapter concerning the importance of maintaining reserves, where Vegetius similarly notes the danger arising "if a detached group (*globus*) of the enemy should begin to press either your wing or some other part"

[2] See Kulakovskii 1902: 3–12 for a discussion of *drungus*/δροῦγγος with lengthy textual quotation, though often from deficient editions; 12–14 for a brief etymological treatment, largely drawn from Du Cange 1688; 15–30 for a discussion of *drungarius*/δρουγγάριος.

[3] For a convenient summary of the dating evidence and earlier literature, see Milner 1996: xxxvii–xli. For subsequent debate, see Zuckerman 1994; Richardot 1998.

[4] Veg. *Epit. mil.* 3.26: *ex libris nihil arbitror colligendum, cum praesens doctrina sufficiat*; cf. contemporary Roman cavalry praised at 1.20.

(*si globus hostium separatus aut alam tuam aut partem aliquam urguere coeperit*, 3.17). Although both these passages present the synonymous *globi* or *drungi* as enemy (*hostium*) formations, they appear to carry out the very role Vegetius has just assigned to the Roman light cavalry, that of threatening and harassing the enemy wings. Vegetius mentions *drungi* a second time in a subsequent chapter concerning how to counter hostile stratagems in battle (3.19). Again he highlights the danger enemy *globi* or *drungi* pose to the Roman flanks:

> Care must be taken especially lest your men be surrounded on their left wing or flank, as often occurs, or indeed on their right, although this rarely happens, by a mass of the enemy or by mobile groups, which they call *drungi*.
>
> *Cavendum vel maxime, ne ab ala cornuque sinistro, quod saepius evenit, aut certe dextro, quod licet raro contingit, circumveniantur tui a multitudine hostium aut a vagantibus globis, quos dicunt drungos.*

Again, although the *globi* or *drungi* are envisaged as enemy formations, they are identical in their tactical role to the Roman light cavalry.[5] The superficial impression that *globi* or *drungi* are solely an enemy phenomenon derives rather from Vegetius' characteristically defensive attitude to combat, which tends to place the tactical initiative with the enemy.

In these chapters Vegetius, as was his custom, reprised antiquarian material, which he occasionally sought to update and elucidate with additional details and contemporary, sometimes popular, terminology. Vegetius' phrase "which they call *drungi*" (*quos dicunt drungos*) is one of the formulae he uses for indicating his insertion of contemporary terminology into his more ancient source(s).[6] In this instance his source was almost certainly the lost *De re militari* of Cato, written in the early second century B.C. and perhaps known to Vegetius only imperfectly through an epitome or at even greater remove. Indeed the word *globus* itself is probably Cato's rather than Vegetius'. This is suggested later in the same chapter (3.19) where Vegetius lists the names and definitions of selected Roman tactical formations, many of them manifestly antiquarian and/or theoretical, such as the "wedge" (*cuneus*), "pincer" (*forfex*), and "saw" (*serra*), and in some cases he similarly updates this material with contemporary expressions, noting of *cuneus*, for example, that "the soldiers call this 'the pig's head'" (*milites nominant caput porcinum*).[7] The final item in this list reads, "the 'group' (*globus*) is a body of men who separate off from their own line, and charge into the enemy in a mobile attack. A more numerous and stronger 'group' is sent against it" (*globus autem dicitur qui a sua acie separatus vago superventu incursat inimicos, contra quem alter populosior vel fortior inmittitur globus*). Vegetius' list corresponds closely to a rare extant

[5] The point is made by Kempf (1901: 369–370) and Milner (1996: 98, n. 4).

[6] For other examples in Vegetius, see below, 103, n. 24.

[7] The popular character of this expression, in effect contemporary "military slang," compared to the classical and more correct *cuneus* is confirmed at Amm. Marc. 17.13.9: "which formation simple military parlance terms 'the pig's head'" (*quem habitum caput porci simplicitas militaris appellat*).

fragment of Cato's treatise: "one needs to attack in a 'wedge' or a 'group' or with the 'forceps' or 'towers' or the 'saw'" (*opus sit cuneo aut globo aut forcipe aut turribus aut serra, uti adoriare*).[8] Further support for the Catonian origin of Vegetius' summary of tactical formations is provided by the appearance of *globus* in a very similar sequence of *vocabula militaria* cited by the second-century A.D. miscellanist Aulus Gellius, who undoubtedly knew Cato's work.[9] In short, Vegetius' original contribution to the middle Republican text of these passages appears to be limited to the additional remark indicating that in his day such detached bands or *globi* were also called *drungi*; apart from this terminological gloss the text is essentially Cato's treatise of the second century B.C. The *globi/drungi* Vegetius describes, therefore, and their tactical role, are not specific to his own period, but reflect a generic designation for mobile tactical formations, Roman or foreign, detached from the main battle line, whose purpose was to harass and outflank the enemy line. Vegetius, who was antiquarian in method if not in purpose, appears to regard *globus* as the "proper" term, while *drungus* was the contemporary language of the soldiers, hence *quos dicunt drungos*, an example of "military slang" rather than technical terminology. Vegetius' *Epitoma*, however, is riddled with misunderstandings of earlier practices and terminology, often founded on his own etymological deductions and historical assumptions. It is not clear how close in reality was the equation between Cato's second-century B.C. *globi* and the cavalry deployment that late fourth-century Roman soldiers called *drungi*. Indeed, it is not even possible to determine with certainty whether Cato's *globus* exclusively applied to cavalry forces, rather than an outflanking "detached band" or "company" of any description; Vegetius himself elsewhere uses *globi* generically in the context of "bands" of infantry, as did his near-contemporary Ammianus Marcellinus and early Latin historians.[10] It is important to bear in mind that Vegetius was adapting an ancient text that appeared to correspond broadly, from his civilian and amateur perspective, to contemporary Roman practices.

The word *drungus* also appears in a narrative historical source, the *Vita* of Probus in the *Historia Augusta*, now dated to the late fourth century and

[8] Cato *De re mil.* fr. 11 in Jordan 1860: 82.

[9] Gell. *NA* 10.9.1: *Quibus modis quoque habitu acies Romana instrui solita sit; quaeque earum instructionum sint vocabula. I. Vocabula sunt militaria, quibus instructa certo modo acies appellari solet: frons, subsidia, cuneus, orbis, globus, forfices, serra, alae, turres.* Gellius also cites Cato *De re militari* at *NA* 6.4.5.

[10] Veg. *Epit. mil.* 3.24: *circumfusis undique armatorum globis.* Milner (1996: 114 with n. 2) strangely translates this "*massed* groups" and "*massed* platoons," which is not even Milner's own definition of the term: cf. 4.18, *eruptione facta globus egreditur armatorum*, where Milner (1996: 131) has "platoon." For Ammianus' use of *globi*, see 20.5.1: *armatarum cohortium globis*; 21.4.8: *cum auxiliorum expeditissimis globis*; 25.1.16: *stipatus armatarum cohortium globis*; 27.8.7: *divisas plurifariam globis adortus est vagantes hostium manus*; 31.5.9: *barbari . . . globos irrupere nostrorum incauti*; 31.7.12: *subsidialis robustissimus globus.* For earlier Latin authors the word *globus* never possessed a sense more specific or technical than "company" or "band": for example, Livy 1.6.7, 12.9; Tac. *Ann.* 4.50, 12.43, 14.61, 15.60; Sil. *Pun.* 7.53. See Kromayer and Veith 1928: 598.

therefore contemporary with Vegetius' *Epitoma*. In a chapter detailing the outstanding public entertainments of Probus' reign, the author comments that the emperor "celebrated a triumph over the Germans and the Blemmyae, and led bands (*drungos*) of up to fifty men from all nations before his triumphal procession" (*triumphavit de Germanis et Blemmyis, omnium gentium drungos usque ad quinquagenos homines ante triumphum duxit*).[11] This is the only non-technical Latin work to contain the word *drungus*, though the author of the *Historia Augusta* appears to have been in some measure sensitive to contemporary military terminology.[12] The contemporary usage of *drungus* therefore extended to the broad sense of a "group," "band," or "company" of any description, without a specifically tactical context. In a very similar passage describing an imperial procession in the *Vita* of Gallienus, the author uses the synonym *globi* rather than *drungi* in an identical context.[13] This underlines the correspondence between the two words as used by Vegetius, and reinforces the impression that *drungus* is not a technical term for a specific tactical formation but rather was understood by late fourth-century authors in the broad sense of "band" or "group." It will be demonstrated below that this usage preserves the original core meaning of this loanword.

Concerning the etymology of *drungus* there is no consensus in modern literature, which, leaving aside the more outlandish antiquarian etymologies, may be divided into two camps that have rarely communicated. Historians of the late Roman and Byzantine military who have discussed the term almost universally cite a Germanic derivation for *drungus*, often in the context of a perceived "Germanization" of late Roman military techniques and personnel. Accordingly, *drungus* is associated with the modern German verb *dringen* (< **þringan*), with the sense "to crowd" or "to press forward," assuming an earlier nominal form **þrunga*. In all cases Du Cange's seventeenth-century lexical entry appears to be the ultimate source of this conclusion.[14] The fourth-century appearance of *drungus*, therefore, is accounted for by the greater presence of Germanic peoples

[11] *SHA Prob.* 19.2. Probus celebrated this triumph in A.D. 281. The phrase *omnium gentium drungos ... ante triumphum duxit* is perhaps echoed in Zonaras *Epit. Hist.* 12.29: (ἱστόρηται) καὶ κατὰ πολλῶν ἐθνῶν τρόπαια στήσασθαι.

[12] For example, *carrago*: *SHA Gall.* 13.9; *Claud.* 8.2, 5; *Aurel.* 11.6; *Clibanarii*: *SHA Sev.* 56.5; *scurra* (with the late sense of "guardsman"): *SHA Heliogab.* 33.7; *Sev. Alex.* 61.3, 62.5 (though unclear meaning at *Tyr. Trig.* 30.26); *centurio*: *SHA Alb.* 11.6: *ordinarios centuriones*.

[13] *SHA Gall.* 8.7: *ibant praeterea gentes simulatae, ut Gothi, Sarmatae, Franci, Persae, ita ut non minus quam duceni globis singulis ducerentur*.

[14] Du Cange 1885–87: s.v. *drungus*, cols. 1657–58. Oman (1898: 175–176) and Kulakovskii (1902: 12–14) accepted the Germanic derivation. It was maintained by Grosse (1920: 256): "Endlich sei noch erwähnt, dadamals ein geschlossener Haufe Fussvolk globus oder drungus genannt wurder. Diese letztere Ausdruck ist eins der vielen germanischen Lehnwörter die damals in die römische Soldatensprache eindrangen"; see also Haldon 1984: 385; Kollautz 1985: 108, n. 9: "Das Wort Drungus ist eindeutig germanischer Herkunft"; Bartusis 1991: 1.664, from German "thrunga" (sic); Kolias 1993: 40.

within the empire from that date and their presumed tactical influence upon Roman fighting styles. However, not only is "Germanization" or "barbarization" no longer considered a wholly accurate characterization of the later Roman army, but the derivation of *drungus* from a posited **þrunga* is also intrinsically unlikely on etymological grounds.[15] Indeed, by contrast, for over a century philologists have concurred with equal unanimity that the late Latin word *drungus* is undoubtedly of Celtic origin. This is most clearly manifested in the Old Irish form *drong* and Old Breton *drogn* or *drog*, whose original sense was "people" or "tribe," which came by extension to mean a "group," "muster," "troop," "crowd," "throng," or "band," both in a generic and a more specific military sense. On the basis of these attested Celtic forms the posited Gaulish **dhrungho* is held to be the direct inspiration for the Latin *drungus*.[16] Earlier lexical entries claiming a Germanic root on the basis of superficially similar modern German forms are the products of naive seventeenth-century guesswork, and even the very small number of subsequent philological studies to prefer a Germanic derivation have recognised its inherent problems.[17]

[15] For important modifications to the traditional "barbarization" thesis, see Whitby 1995; Elton 1996; Nicasie 1998: 107–116.

[16] Holder 1896: 1.1331 s.v. *drungo-*; Kempf 1901: 369–370; Pedersen 1909–13: 1.106–7; *TLL* V.1, fasc. x, col. 2071: "vox gallica vel britannica esse videtur ... caterva, turba"; Dottin 1920: 253; Walde and Hofmann 1938–54: 374–375; Pokorny 1959: 1:1093, s.v. *trenk-*: "ngr. δρούγγος, spätlat. *drungus* und air. *drong* 'Schar' sind echt keltisch (**dhrungho-*) und keine germ."; Mihăescu 1968: 495; Ernout and Meillet 1979: 185: "mot étranger, sans doute celtique"; Lambert 1997: s.v. *drong*; 2003: 205; Delamarre 2003: 126. The Celtic derivation is tacitly accepted by Milner (1996: 98, n. 4).

[17] The "Teutonic" origin of *drungus* was first vigorously stated by Pontanus (1606: 223–224), "Drungus hodieque purum putum nostri Teutonicique idiomatis vocabulum est .... Nam hodie nostratibus Germanisque usitatius est, *Gedrung* & *gedreng*." Spelman (1664: 185–186) relates *drungus* to the (actually unattested) Anglo-Saxon *ðrunga* and the modern English "throng" (in fact probably derived from AS *geþrang*). Both Pontanus and Spelman are cited by L. Favre (in Du Cange 1885–87: s.v. *drungus*, cols. 1657–58), seemingly with neither consent nor rebuttal, though his comment on Pontanus' rather simplistic reasoning "quod idem sonat" (i.e., *drungus* and *Gedrung*) perhaps hints at caution. Presumably following these entries, von Miklosich (1886: 50, s.v. *drongar??*), accepted the Anglo-Saxon *drunga* (sic) as the origin. Subsequent studies were aware that initial Gmc *þr-* would produce Lat *tr-* and not *dr-* (see Kempf 1901: 369–370). Brüch (1913: 16–17), while accepting this, indulged in special pleading to postulate that Latin *drungus* had therefore resulted from a conflation of two (unattested) Gmc words **þrung* and **druht*. Brüch moreover explained away the Old Irish *drong* (and presumably other attested Celtic forms) by boldly asserting that the Old Irish form was itself, on the contrary, a borrowing from Latin, and not vice versa; for this he cites Walde, though Walde says nothing of the sort and in fact favoured the Celtic derivation (cf. Walde and Hofmann 1938–54: 374–375; Brüch cites 1906 ed.). Although at very best improbable, Brüch's conclusion was cited by Gamillscheg (1970: 23), and his argument was recently rehearsed by Green (1998: 185), though with much less conviction. Kuhn (1972: 44), noting that the word "sounded Germanic," nevertheless recognises that the initial sound is problematic and the etymology doubtful. Brüch 1913 was the last and only modern study to argue the case a for Germanic derivation on the etymological evidence. In a lengthy review article, Terracini (1921: 425–426) casually inferred without argumentation, and purely on the basis of historical circumstance, that *drungus* was likely to be Germanic, because of its late attestation, and suggested (as did Brüch, implausibly) that it had thereafter somehow passed via

The precise reasons for the adoption of this Celtic term, and the date this occurred, are obscure. Roman military historians comfortable with the "Germanization" context will doubtless find a Celtic derivation less convenient, though it is not as problematic as it initially appears. Roman authors express an interest in and admiration for Gallic, Iberian, and British cavalry, and the raising and deployment of Roman *auxilia* cavalry from these peoples, especially in the pre-Flavian period, is well attested.[18] Their importance and influence is indicated in the Roman adoption of a wide range of Gallic equestrian practices and technologies, including designs of bridle bit, saddle, and harness; horse-shoeing and riding techniques; "equestrian deities" and horse breeds; as well as the related technology of wheeled vehicles.[19] More to the point, in his *Ars Tactica* of A.D. 136/7, Arrian singles out "Celtic techniques" (τὰ πράγματα αὐτὰ Κελτικά) as being especially influential in the development of Roman cavalry, and notes that several terms in current usage among the Roman cavalry "derive from the language of Iberians or Celts" (ἀλλὰ ἔστιν ἃ τῆς (φωνῆς) Ἰβήρων ἢ Κελτῶν), including the "Cantabrian charge," *xynema*, *petrinos*, and *toloutegon* (Κανταβρικὴ ἐπέλασις, ξύνημα, πέτρινος, τολούτεγον).[20] More generally, it is possible to cite other Celtic loanwords which passed into standard Latin military vocabulary, including later common terms such as *lancea* and *sagum*, though the adoption of very few appears to post-date the late Republic.[21] Here lies the apparent difficulty with a "Celtic" *drungus*: why should a Gaulish term make its first appearance in two (probably) late fourth-century texts? Contact with Celtic peoples, and most likely Gallic recruits, seems the most obvious context. Literary and epigraphic evidence suggests that the Gaulish language still enjoyed some degree of currency in Gaul, and continued to influence locally-spoken Latin, up to the fourth century, especially in rural areas and even at an elite level, and traces may be discerned as

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Latin into insular Celtic languages. Terracini's line of speculation, unscientific and later emphatically rejected by other philologists, was nevertheless repeated as fact by Weisgerber (1931: 199), and thence by Whatmough (1950: 220; repr. 1970: 894).

[18] For example, Strabo 4.4.2: "they (the Gauls) are better as cavalry than as infantry and the best cavalry the Romans have comes from these peoples" (κρείττους δ' ἱππόται ἢ πεζοί καὶ ἔστι Ῥωμαίοις τῆς ἱππείας ἀρίστη παρὰ τοῦτων); cf. Caesar *B Gall.* 1.15, 7.76; *B Civ.* 3.59–60; *B Afr.* 6; Plut. *Crass.* 25; App. *B Civ.* 4.88. See generally Cheeseman 1914: 57–65; Saddington 1982: 5–14, 137–160; Goldsworthy 1996: 68–73.

[19] Luff 1982; Bishop 1988: 71–74; Dixon and Southern 1992: 63–64, 67–69, 122; Junkelmann 1992: 18–19, 35–36, 57–58, 94–97; Hyland 1990: 122–125; 1993: 41–43, 45–51. In addition, Schmidt (1967: 168–170) identifies twelve certain or likely Celtic loanwords in Latin terminology for wheeled vehicles, attesting the influential techniques of Celtic cartwrights and wheelwrights.

[20] Arr. *Tact.* 33.1; cf. 37.4: ὁ πέτρινος δὴ ὀνομαζόμενος τῇ Κελτῶν φωνῇ; 40.1: Κανταβρική τις καλουμένη ἐπέλασις γίνεται; 42.4: ἡ γὰρ δὴ ξύνημα τῇ Κελτῶν φωνῇ καλουμένη; 43.2: καὶ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο Κελτιστὶ τολούτεγον καλεῖται; for explanation and commentary, see Hyland 1993.

[21] Kempf (1901: 385–386) lists a number of "Celtica verba" signifying Celtic military equipment, which passed into Latin (in a few cases through Greek) and in some instances entered regular Roman military terminology: *caetra, cantabrum, carrus, cateia, gaesum, lancea, mataris, parma, sagum*. Of these only *cantabrum*, like *drungus*, is first attested in a post-Republican context.

late as the sixth century.[22] For comparative purposes, one could cite *bagaudae* or *bacaudae* as a Gaulish-derived word that gained currency in Latin in the late third and early fourth centuries.[23] But given the popular, non-technical character of *drungus* outlined above, essentially as an element of "military slang," it is safe to assume that its first attestation in a literary text is no real indicator of the date of its adoption or the period of its usage. Vegetius' *Epitoma* is the only extant general military treatise in Latin and as such uniquely preserves a considerable number of terms unattested before him, but very unlikely in every case to be neologisms of his period.[24] A very similar example may be cited from Vegetius' own *Digesta artis mulomedicinae*, like his *Epitoma* a compendium of earlier writings and the only surviving general Latin treatise of its genre, in this instance veterinary medicine, principally equine. Here Vegetius uses another Gaulish word, *gulbia*, the term for a specially-designed tool used to cut away the dead part of a horse's hoof during an operation to release infected matter in cases of chronic lameness. This device appears to resemble a farrier's traditional butteris, a sharp, long-handled chisel for paring or trimming hooves.[25] Vegetius is the first author to use this word (indeed it is only otherwise attested, as *guvia*, two centuries later in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* at 19.19.15), but given that Celtic technology and techniques had

[22] For fourth-century survival, cf., for example, Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* 1.27; Jer. *Comm. in Ep. Gal.* 2. The degree of emphasis is debatable: MacMullen (1966: 14–15), largely on the basis of literary evidence, suggests that Gaulish may have continued to be the predominant language in some regions, possibly even undergoing a resurgence in the fourth century; Whatmough (1970: 68–76) is less positive.

[23] The word *bagaudae* or *bacaudae* first appears in the 280s, seemingly as a popular designation for brigands; cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39.17: *quos Bagaudas incolae vocant.* The word *bagaudae* probably derives from the Celtic **bāgā*, a fight, with the Celtic suffix *-aud*; see Walde and Hofmann 1938–54; Szádeczky-Kardoss 1968; Minor 1975. For other references, see Czúth 1965 and generally van Dam 1985: 17–20, 25–56; Drinkwater 1992.

[24] Vegetius' use of phrases like *quos dicunt* does not necessarily imply something new to his own time, but often refers to practices and phenomena of considerable antiquity. This is true even in the case of *nunc dicitur* or *nunc dicunt*, which *appear* to refer to "recently" adopted, and certainly previously unattested, terms, but Vegetius' etymological glosses may mean no more than a terminological change in the long interval since the production of his source material, which in some instances dates to the second century B.C. See, for example, 2.1: *quae nunc vexillationes uocantur*; 2.7: *quos nunc draconarios vocant*; 2.8: *quem nunc ducenarium vocant, . . . centuriones . . . qui nunc centenarii nominantur, . . . decani . . . qui nunc caput contubernii vocantur*; 2.13: *insuper, qui nunc centenarii vocantur*; 2.15: *nunc spiculum dicitur . . . nunc verutum dicitur . . . quos nunc exculcatores et armaturas dicimus*; 2.20: *apud signiferos, ut nunc dicunt*; *. . . Erant decani, denis militibus praepositi, qui nunc caput contubernii vocantur*; 3.8: *nunc militiae factus est gradus et circitores vocantur*; 3.14: *quos antea principes vocabant . . . quos prius hastatos vocabant, . . . antea ferentarios nominabant*; 3.19: *quam rem milites nominant caput porcinum.*

[25] Veg. *Mulomed.* 1.26.2: *compones pedem ad gulbiam et omnem ungulam ad vivum allides* ("bring the foot up against a *gulbia* and pare away the hoof as far as the living tissue"). The now largely obsolete butteris was a long, sharp-pointed chisel mounted on a wooden stock shaped to fit against the farrier's shoulder. With the horse's hoof in one hand, and its lower leg secured between his knees, the farrier would direct the blade of the butteris with his other hand, pushing down on the tool with his shoulder to trim the sole of the hoof. It has in recent years been superseded by the more dextrous hoof knife. For archaeological evidence, see Walker 1973: 321–322, though he equates, I believe wrongly, the butteris with the word *ferramentum* (clearly rather a kind of scalpel at Veg. *Mulomed.* 2.42.2)

exercised a strong influence on Roman equestrian science since at least the first century A.D., and especially Celtic-inspired developments in horse-shoeing from that date, it is impossible to believe that both this implement and its Gaulish name only came into use more than three centuries later.[26] The first attestation of *gulbia* therefore has been determined by the unique survival and technical content of Vegetius' veterinary handbook, though centuries of vernacular usage undoubtedly preceded his treatise.

Returning to *drungus*, as noted above, the author of the *Historia Augusta* was also aware of contemporary developments in Roman military terminology, but, more to the point, his use of *drungus* indicates that by the time of writing *drungus* had already acquired a wider "civilian" currency as a generic word for "band" or "group." I would suggest, therefore, that the use of the Gaulish-derived word *drungus*, especially at a vernacular level among Roman soldiers, had a much longer "prehistory," and that its first appearance in *extant* texts in the late fourth century is due primarily to the absence of earlier authors prepared to use such Vulgar Latin terminology inconsistent with stylistic purity. If this impression of the long-term popular currency of *drungus* is correct, then the original adoption of the term into Latin, whatever the circumstances, is not necessarily to be connected with the simultaneous adoption of a specific Celtic practice, that is a distinct style of cavalry combat or tactics. It is quite possible, indeed likely, that this was rather a nominal borrowing which popularly applied a Gaulish word to an existing and corresponding Roman practice or phenomenon. Thus, in military parlance, and presumably originally among Gallic soldiers, a "detachment" of cavalry, and possibly of other troops, came to be known unofficially by the "barbarian" word *drungus*. Vegetius does not really provide an answer in this respect, since, as we have seen, he interpolates a contemporary terminological gloss into an antiquarian literary model.[27] Unfortunately far too little is known of the fighting styles of earlier Gallic cavalry, or, in detail, of Roman cavalry prior to the first technical treatment of the subject in the late sixth-century *Strategicon*.[28] It will be suggested

[26] *Gulvia* is glossed as *podoglifin* (= ποδογλύφιν; var. ποδογλυφεῖοιν) in *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum* 2.522.46. For the Late Latin *gubia*, *gulbia*, and *guvia* and its Celtic derivation see *TLL* VI.2, col. 2354, s.v. *gubia* et *gulbia*; Dottin 1920: 261, s.v. *gulbia*; Walde and Hofmann 1938–54: 625, s.v. *gubia* und *gulbia*; Pokorny 1959: 1.367, s.v. *gelebh-*; Ernout and Meillet 1979: 284, s.v. *gubia*; Lambert 2003: 198. Cf. Old Irish *gulban* (**gulbino-*); Old Welsh *gilbin*; Old Breton *golbina*, the core sense of which is "beak," "prickle," or "spike." Niedermann (1921: 440–441) alone doubts the Celtic derivation, but see Vendryes 1924: 503–504. The archaeological evidence for metal horse-shoeing, dating back as far as the late first century B.C., is restricted to Gaul and Britain, and perhaps reflects climatic conditions together with Celtic equestrian knowledge and metallurgical techniques: see Hyland 1990: 122–125.

[27] Though it is perhaps worth noting the evidence for a possible Celtic or Celtiberian background for Vegetius and his equestrian knowledge in the context of the *Digesta artis mulomedicinae*. See Milner 1996: xxxii–xxxv.

[28] "Celtic" cavalry deployment is obscure. The comment of Caesar (*B Gall.* 5.16) that the British cavalry "never fought in close array but in loose order with wide intervals" (*accedebat huc ut numquam*

below, however, that the more frequent usage of *drungus* and its cognates from the late fourth century does not signify radically "new" tactics developed by the late Roman cavalry, but in fact reflects in part the idiomatic concerns of particular authors prepared to use vernacular terminology, and in part a changing emphasis in Roman cavalry operations which saw the more frequent use and perfection of certain *existing* practices and deployments.

ΔΡΟΥΓΓΟΣ IN GREEK SOURCES

After the late fourth century the term *drungus* is attested only in the Greek transliteration δρουῦγγος. The first appearance of δρουῦγγος again illustrates the generic, non-technical sense of the word. In a letter to his disciple Olympias (written ca 404–407), John Chrysostom describes his experiences in Caesarea when confronted by the twin menace of Isaurian bandits and violently hostile monks, detailing how "collectively towards dawn a '*drungus*' of monks—for thus must one call it and indicate in speech their frenzy—came to the house we were in" (ἀθρόον ὑπὸ τὴν ἕω δρουῦγγος μοναζόντων—οὕτω γὰρ δεῖ εἰπεῖν καὶ τῇ λέξει τὴν μανίαν αὐτῶν ἐνδείξασθαι—ἐπέστησαν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἔνθα ἦμεν).[29] Chrysostom's purpose in this passage is to emphasise the violent behaviour of the monks by juxtaposing their μανία to the threat posed by the Isaurian marauders, even claiming that the soldiers defending him were less frightened of the latter. Whatever the polemical nature of this narrative, the hostile context of the monks' forceful, mob-like actions seems to require a translation such as "rabble" or "troop," perhaps with deliberately military overtones. This is the only late Roman usage of δρουῦγγος before the *Strategicon* ascribed to the Emperor Maurice, and reveals, like the appearance of *drungi* in the *Historia Augusta*, a somewhat wider currency for the term beyond technical military treatises.

The officially sponsored "handbook for generals" known as the *Strategicon* was compiled in the 590s, with a manuscript ascription (accepted here) to the Emperor Maurice (582–602).[30] The *Strategicon* is not a treatise "on strategy," but explicitly a "rather modest elementary guide or introduction" (μετρίαν τινὰ

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conferti sed rari magnisque intervallis proeliarentur stationesque dispositas haberent, atque alios alii deinceps exciperent, integrique et recentes defetigatis succederent) is vaguely reminiscent of Vegetius' *vagantes globi* or *globus qui a sua acie separatus*. The comparison is inconclusive, however, and does not agree with the evidence for the character of a *drungus* discussed below; in any case the passage's textual problems make its relevance to specifically cavalry forces uncertain. For a probably late first-century "intelligence report" on British fighting techniques, see Bowman and Thomas 1987: 135–137 (= Tab. Vindol. 2.164); Goldsworthy 1996: 239–240. These are at best superficial comparisons and probably reflect generalized Roman perspectives of "barbarian" cavalry operating in loose tactical groupings rather than close-order linear formations.

[29] J. Chrysostom *Ep.* 4 *ad Olymp.* 2 (*PG* 52, col. 614).

[30] The arguments for date and authorship are summarised in Dennis 1981: 15–18; Rance 1994: 28–42. In addition, that the *Strategicon* is not dedicated to the reigning emperor, uniquely among Roman *tactica* (with the exception of Onasander's dedication to a consular), in itself implies at least imperial sponsorship.

στοιχείωσιν ἤτοι εἰσαγωγὴν), which is concerned primarily with the day-to-day routines and procedures and rather mundane technical minutiae of contemporary military practice.[31] Maurice expressly eschews stylistic considerations in favour of practical utility and writes in a plain vernacular idiom comprehensible to army officers, often utilising contemporary military jargon and "Latin and other terms which have been in common military usage."[32] The *Strategicon* is in large part a compendium of late Roman military documents—ordinances, disciplinary regulations, "drill books," and procedural explanations—and owes relatively little to the more polished literary compositions of the earlier genre. As such the *Strategicon* often uniquely preserves the sort of informal and non-literary material that rarely survives outside papyrological contexts, including the most detailed and technical treatment of the fundamentals of cavalry training, deployment, and tactics to survive from antiquity. This is of very considerable value in elucidating earlier Roman practices, especially given Vegetius' near-complete neglect of cavalry.

Maurice employs the term δροῦγγος in a number of quite distinct senses. In one context Maurice's δροῦγγος appears to be consistent with the terminological usage and tactical deployment found in Vegetius' *Epitoma*. As part of his schematic treatment of a "typical" cavalry engagement, Maurice describes in detail sophisticated outflanking manoeuvres (3.14) carried out by a single "concealed *drungus*" (δροῦγγος λανθάνων). The "concealed *drungus*" was to advance behind a screening formation of "outflankers" (ὑπερκερασταί) positioned on the extreme right of the Roman battle line. It appears that this screening unit and "concealed *drungus*" each comprise a single "regiment" (τάγμα or βάνδον) of 200–300 men.[33] Just before contact with the enemy battle line, the "outflankers" extend their screen and begin to encircle the enemy's left flank. As they do this, the "concealed *drungus*" charges out from behind the screening formation into the rear of the

[31] *Strat.* pref. 14–24. It was, however, very much a *topos* of the genre to emphasize the elementary nature of a treatise relative to earlier "classics." In fact, Maurice's preface, in content and vocabulary, owes much to Aelian's *Tactica Theoria* 1.2, 6, in particular the notion that both texts are an εἰσαγωγή as opposed to more advanced technical monographs.

[32] *Strat.* pref. 29–30: ὅθεν καὶ Ῥωμαϊκαῖς πολλάκις καὶ ἄλλαις ἐν στρατιωτικῇ συνηθείᾳ τετριμμέναις χρήμεθα λέξεσι. See the recent comments of Rance (2000: 31–34).

[33] The duties of "outflankers" are explained at *Strat.* 3.14; cf. 3.10 for the overall battle plan with diagrams. See generally Mazzucchi 1981: 128–129. At 3.14.4–7 there are two units of outflankers, here named *tagmata*, though "*banda* of archers" at 2.4.5–6; Maurice uses these terms synonymously throughout. The codices of the *Strategicon* exhibit some inconsistency in the two diagrams of this manoeuvre at 3.10. In the first diagram the "concealed *drungus*" is labelled δροῦγγος πρῶτος (M; incorrectly δροῦγγος τρίτος in Dennis 1981: 178, apparatus) or δροῦγγος γ' (VN), though simply δροῦγγος (PA). These variations are repeated in the following diagram, but with δροῦγγος τρίτος in M. The "third *drungus*" (δροῦγγος τρίτος) must be a straightforward misreading of πρῶτος as τρίτος. The reading "first *drungus*" (δροῦγγος πρῶτος) is itself presumably a misunderstanding of δροῦγγος α' or "one *drungus*," as emended by Scheffer (1664: unpag. = 540; Dennis 1981: 178). For the representation of the "concealed *drungus*" as a triangle in the diagrams at *Strat.* 3.10 in printed editions see below, 114–115, n. 55.

enemy, its men causing as much confusion as they can just as the opposing battle lines engage. Thus, Maurice writes, "even in open country they are able to carry out ambushes (τὰς ἐνέδρας) relatively safely." Dennis loses the force of this point by translating τὰς ἐνέδρας here as "surprise attacks," but elsewhere always as "ambushes."[34] The point is that highly trained Roman cavalry were expected to be able to engineer an "ambush" even in the open field, regardless of terrain or circumstances, and by a carefully orchestrated stratagem minimised the dangers of a frontal assault. Maurice recommends that in training these tactics be rehearsed against a simulated enemy formed by a single line of Roman soldiers, so that the outflankers, including the "concealed *drungus*," might gauge and coordinate the speed and direction of their manoeuvres.[35]

Maurice's precepts here are reminiscent of Vegetius' description of the tactical operations of *drungi* or *vagantes globi*, detached from their main line (*a sua acie separatus*), which were especially suited to outflanking and enveloping the enemy's left wing (*ab ala cornuque sinistro . . . circumveniantur*). The difference is really only in the degree of detail, which merely reflects the two authors' divergent interests, and especially Maurice's particular concern to encourage the correct deployment and tactical manoeuvres of cavalry. This similarity also underlines the characterization of the *Strategicon* as essentially a compendium of late Roman documents, descriptive in character, rather than the prescriptive "reform" or innovation suggested by its superficially "Byzantine" appearance, which in large part derives from its vernacular Greek idiom and its unique preservation of (certainly older) technical material.

Continuity between Vegetius and Maurice should not surprise, and supports the earlier assertion that the frequency with which the vernacular word *drungus*/δροῦγγος is attested depends above all on the survival of texts whose authors were prepared to employ such popular usages. In particular, the literary idiom favoured by contemporary narrative historians, together with their general avoidance of the technical details of battles in favour of dramatic prose sequences aimed at a civilian readership, renders very difficult the identification of Vegetius' *drungi* or *vagantes globi* operating on the wings or Maurice's outflanking "concealed *drungus*" (δροῦγγος λανθάνων). For example, the experienced Roman officer Ammianus Marcellinus describes the deployment of a rebel army in 373, comprising mainly Moorish troops. He reports that there were nearly 20,000 in the main battle line, "with bands (*globi*) of reserves concealed behind them, in order that they might gradually rise up and envelop our men with their unexpected numbers."[36] Although the generally vague language and the Moorish context

[34] *Strat.* 3.14.32–34, translated at Dennis 1984: 50.

[35] The "concealed *drungus*" (δροῦγγος λανθάνων) is also remarked upon at 3.5.77–85, where tactical secrecy is enjoined, and at 86–92 and 110–126, regarding training requirements. See Rance 2000: 234–6.

[36] Amm. Marc. 29.5.47: *et barbarorum viginti paene milia in ipsis locata sunt frontibus, occultatis pone terga subsidialibus globis, ut assurgentes paulatim nostros multitudine clauderent insperata.* For another

make direct comparisons uncertain, the tactical concept and terminology appear to reflect the Roman battle tactics described by the near-contemporary Vegetius, and later by Maurice. It is just possible that Ammianus describes here a "barbarian" battle deployment conceptualised in Roman terms.

The "concealed drungus" (δροῦγγος λανθάνων) is the only context in which Maurice uses the noun δροῦγγος in the sense of a specific tactical deployment. The character of this deployment will be discussed below in relation to the cognate adverb δρουγγιστί, but it is first necessary to examine a different usage of δροῦγγος in the *Strategicon*, one that has generated some confusion. The intrinsic ambiguity of certain passages of this treatise has been compounded by the tendency of some modern scholars to read Maurice's text, and envisage the army he describes, in light of later Byzantine military developments that are in fact anachronistic to Maurice's period. This is part of a wider contextual problem with the *Strategicon*, which has tended to be the preserve of Byzantine scholarship and thus seen as an early text in Byzantine military history; it has been relatively neglected by Roman scholars, for whom, as noted above, it preserves valuable information and perspectives. Throughout the treatise Maurice also employs δροῦγγος in the generic sense of a "grouping," a "banding together," or even the non-specific "formation" or "unit." This is particularly the case with the larger cavalry formations he describes, such as a "brigade" or *moira* (μοῖρα) and a "division" or *meros* (μέρος). Maurice defines these formations as follows: "a *meros* is a grouping or *drungus* composed of three *moirai*; while a *moira* is a body composed of *tagmata* or *numeri* or *banda*" (μέρος ἐστὶ τὸ ἐκ τριῶν μοιρῶν συγκείμενον ἄθροισμα ἤγουν δροῦγγος, μοῖρα δὲ τὸ ἐκ ταγμάτων ἤτοι ἀριθμῶν ἢ βάνδων συγκείμενον πλῆθος, *Strat.* 1.3.14–15). It is very tempting to see δροῦγγος here, as others have, as a synonym for μέρος. This is especially so given that the term δροῦγγος is later attested in middle Byzantine texts as the official title of a specific and permanent unit within the army's organizational structure (see below). It has therefore been asserted that a "division" of the late sixth-century Roman army was called a μέρος or δροῦγγος, and that Maurice "frequently uses *drouggos* to mean *meros*."[37] A later passage appears to confirm this interpretation, where Maurice writes, "it is sufficient for only one *drungus* or *meros* to adopt these positions" (ἀρκεῖ καὶ δι' ἑνὸς μόνου δρούγγου ἤτοι μέρους τοῦτο γίνεσθαι τὸ σχῆμα, *Strat.* 9.3.103–104).

It is important to appreciate, however, precisely what Maurice is describing and the nature of the terms he uses. First, in Maurice's day, while these "brigades" and "divisions" undoubtedly existed, they were temporary and *ad*

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possible instance of *globi* deployed in outflanking, see 25.3.4: *ex alia parte cataphractorum Parthicus globus centurias adoritur medias, ac sinistro cornu inclinato acriter superfusus* . . . .

[37] Zilliacus 1935: 144–145; Mihăescu 1968: 495–496; Haldon 1984: 385–386 (quoted); 1999: 315, n. 6. Mihăescu defined δροῦγγος as "foule dense, masse" or "rassemblement, agglomération," believing it to be a synonym for μέρος, as "partie d'une armée." Mihăescu numbers this synonymous μέρος/δροῦγγος at 3,000 strong, though a μέρος in the *Strategicon* has around twice that strength; he appears to have in mind the later Byzantine δροῦγγος.

hoc groupings for individual campaigns or even particular battles, rather than permanent administrative structures of the late Roman army. Direct comparison with the middle Byzantine period, when such permanent structures did exist, is therefore unhelpful. Second, in the early chapters of the *Strategicon*, Maurice endeavours to establish a workable terminology for his treatise, a set of coverall Greek words for certain units, ranks, commands, and practices which will help the reader through a potentially confusing multiplicity of terms derived from different languages, genres, and registers—official titulature, vernacular idiom, literary genre, Latin, Greek, or "barbarian." In effect, he coins words so generic that the reader will understand what he means later in the treatise without his having to list all the possible terms for the same phenomenon or practice: hence, for example, "A *comes* or *tribunus* is the leader of a *tagma* or *arithmos* or *bandum*" (κόμης δέ ἐστιν ἤτοι τριβοῦνος ὁ τοῦ τάγματος ἢ ἀριθμοῦ ἢ βάνδου ἡγούμενος, 1.3.16), or "*moirarchs*, who are also called *duces* or *chiliarchs*" (μοιράρχας ... τοὺς λεγομένους δοῦκας ἤτοι χιλιάρχας, 1.4.13).[38] Although for the sake of utility Maurice purposefully employs contemporary Latin terminology throughout his work, he mixes this with words drawn from the long-standing tradition of military treatises or *tactica* written in Greek, what might be called a useful but artificial "*tactica*-speak," of which the generic μοῖρα and μέρος are clear examples.[39] These are not therefore technical terms or

[38] In the first example, κόμης, τριβοῦνος, and βάνδον are hellenized Latin terms, the last of Germanic origin; ἀριθμός is a translation of the Latin *numerus*; and τάγμα is Maurice's generic term for any type of "regiment." In the second example, Maurice defines his generic *moirarch* (μοιράρχης) in relation to both contemporary official Roman titulature, *dux*/δούξ, and to *chiliarch* (χιλιάρχης), a word derived from the earlier genre of Greek tactical treatises. These generic terms allowed the author to talk very generally about an army that contained different types of unit, perhaps with different command structures.

[39] The *moira* (μοῖρα) is attested in this sense nowhere else, though it is reminiscent of fourth-century regimental "pairings," on which see Elton 1996: 91. Maurice clarifies the term by equating it to a *chiliarchia* (χιλιαρχία), a convenient term derived from Hellenistic military vocabulary; cf. *Strat.* 1.4.11, 13: εἰς μοίρας ἤτοι χιλιαρχίας ... μοιράρχας χρησίμους τοὺς λεγομένους δοῦκας ἤτοι χιλιάρχας. The word μοῖρα has a longer literary tradition, however, as a generic "company," in different sources variously equating to *decuria*, *centuria*, *manipulus*, or *cohors* (e.g., Strabo, τέτταρες μοῖραι ἀνδρῶν) or more broadly a "section" of men; cf. Herodian 6.6.3 and *TGL* 6, col. 1133D–1134A. Antiquarian tactical treatises contain the cognate διμοιρία of eighty men, commanded by a διμοιρίτης; see Asclep. 2.2; Ael. 5.2; Arr. *Tact.* 6.2. Agathias (*Hist.* 1.17.4, 20.7) employs the word ἀπόμοιρα in the hitherto unattested sense of a "detachment" of an army.

While μέρος is not previously attested in this sense in tactical literature it is an obvious generic term for "division," and the cognate μεραρχία, commanded by a μεράρχης, appears in earlier antiquarian military treatises, where it comprises "two *chiliarchae*" (αἱ δύο χιλιαρχίαι; just as Maurice uses χιλιαρχία as a synonym for μοῖρα), and totals 2048 men: see Asclep. 2.10; Ael. 9.7; Arr. *Tact.* 10.5. It appears that for most of the army (setting aside some elite praesental units) there were no permanent tactical or administrative structures in this period above the 200- to 400-strong τάγμα, Maurice's coverall term for the several types of "regiment" that might make up an army (probably the realistic field strength of a unit whose paper strength was 500). The need for such larger battlefield formations and commands as μοῖρα and μέρος arises in part from the small unit sizes of the late Roman army. The earlier imperial legion offered a convenient apparatus for deploying 5,000 to 6,000 troops on the

the official late Roman nomenclature for "brigade" and "division"—indeed it is extremely doubtful whether the currency of μοῖρα and μέρος in this sense extended beyond the milieu of Greek tactical writing; they are convenient coverall terms for *ad hoc* battlefield groupings. Similarly, their commanding officers, Maurice's *moirarch* (μοιράρχης) and *merarch* (μεράρχης), are better understood as generic terms for temporary campaign or battlefield commands rather than permanent "ranks" in an established *Rangordnung*. To be sure, there were senior officers who acted as "flank commander" or "the general commanding the centre," but they did not bear these artificial and generic titles. I would suggest that in contemporary Latin terminology, Maurice's *moirarchs* and *merarchs* would be variously *magistri militum*, *comites*, *duces*, or *tribuni*, or even commanders of significant allied contingents, or a trusted *bucellarius* of the commander-in-chief, in short a broad collection of senior officers who would be assigned to whichever of these *ad hoc* positions corresponded to their existing seniority, abilities, or connections.[40]

Returning to Maurice's definition of a "division," therefore: in the phrase μέρος ἐστὶ τὸ ἐκ τριῶν μοιρῶν συγκείμενον ἄθροισμα ἤγουν δροῦγγος, the term δροῦγγος is employed not as an alternative technical term for μέρος but as a synonym for the generic ἄθροισμα, that is simply a "grouping" of brigades or *moirai* (μοῖραι).[41] Similarly Maurice defines a μοῖρα itself as a "combination" or "group" (πλῆθος) of regiments (μοῖρα δὲ τὸ ἐκ ταγμάτων ἤτοι ἀριθμῶν ἢ βάνδων συγκείμενον πλῆθος, *Strat.* 1.3); here δροῦγγος has no more specific or technical a sense than πλῆθος.[42] This is also apparent in other passages of the

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battlefield. Even if nothing were known of μοῖραι and μέρη, we might assume that the later army had some mechanism for grouping its many small units into larger tactical commands in the battle line.

[40] See *Strat.* 1.4.15: "*merarchs*, who are also called *stratelatai*" (μεράρχας, τοὺς λεγομένους στρατηλάτας). The term στρατηλάτης was often used in the later Roman period as a direct Greek equivalent of a *magister militum* (Grosse 1920: 183), but sixth- and early seventh-century usage was far less precise and this increasingly devalued title could variously denote a *dux* (e.g., J. Mal. 366.78–80: στρατηλάτης τῆς Μυσίας = *dux Moesiae* [*secundae*]), a *tribunus* or a high-ranking notable commanding troops in any capacity, or even a civilian employing *bucellarii*. In the *Strategicon* it appears to encompass a number of senior ranks; for detailed discussion, see Durliat 1979.

In comparing the *Strategicon* with the near-contemporary battle narratives of historians, the problem is therefore one of idiom. In their descriptions of battlefield deployments the Roman army is often divided into a left, right, and centre division, which equate to Maurice's generic *meros*, whatever the historians call them (sometimes indeed μέρος, otherwise classicising φάλαγγες, τάξεις, etc.). Writers like Procopius or Theophylact Simocatta note that these "divisions" were commanded by named officers. Again these are what Maurice for convenience calls *merarchs* (μεράρχαι), while the historians usually call them στρατηγοί or ἄρχοντες. The long lists of officers sometimes appearing in Procopius (e.g., *Vand.* 2.3.4 has six named and an unspecified number of unnamed ἄρχοντες holding the left) may perhaps be what Maurice generically terms *moirarchs* (μοιράρχαι), that is, officers commanding *ad hoc* groups of two to four "regiments."

[41] This point was in fact appreciated by much earlier scholarship: Pontanus 1606: 223; Scheffer 1664: 401; Kulakovskii 1902: 5–6.

[42] Note *TLL* s.v. *globus* II, col. 2054: Gloss: πλῆθος.

Strategicon in which δρουγγοί has the non-technical sense of "formations," rather than serving as the actual title of a unit. Thus, Maurice remarks that "the ancients, having carefully observed this principle, used to deploy in various '*drungi*,' that is divisions and brigades according to the circumstances" (οἱ ἀρχαῖοι τοῦτο παρατηρήσαντες εἰς δρούγγους ἤτοι μέρη καὶ μοίρας διαφόρους πρός τὴν χρείαν ἔτασσον, *Strat.* 2.1.19–20). Similarly, Maurice requires that the army be divided "into brigades and divisions or the various so-called '*drungi*'" (εἰς μοίρας καὶ μέρη ἤτοι τοὺς λεγομένους δρούγγους διαφόρους, *Strat.* 2.2.2–3).[43] The epexegetical phrase τοὺς λεγομένους indicates Maurice's employment of contemporary popular or vernacular expressions, which in this instance supplements and in part clarifies his μοῖρα and μέρος. Indeed, existing at this more informal linguistic register, the word δροῦγγος would have enjoyed a far wider currency than these two genre terms.[44] In this period, therefore, δροῦγγος remained a popular expression meaning little more than "group" or "band" regardless of size or deployment. The best indication of this is Maurice's use of the term to describe light infantry deployed in very small groups. In his discussion of how infantry should employ skirmishing tactics when operating in densely wooded or obstructed locations, he recommends that "light infantry be deployed not like the heavy infantry in line, but in *drungi* (κατὰ δρούγγους)," which he specifies should ideally comprise three or four javelineers and an archer, and should be positioned on the march so that each *drungus* is easily able to support its neighbours.[45] In short, Maurice applies the term δροῦγγος with the generic sense of "group" or "unit" to *ad hoc* formations ranging from five- to six-thousand-strong cavalry divisions to four-man parties of light infantry. This sense corresponds closely to the earlier usage of *drungus* in Vegetius, as a synonym for a *globus* of soldiers, and in the *Historia Augusta* to designate "bands" of prisoners in a triumph, as well as to John Chrysostom's hostile application of δροῦγγος to a "mob" or "troop" of militant monks.

It is only in middle Byzantine texts that δροῦγγος comes to be the official title of a specific and permanent unit or "brigade," a separate development that is worth brief consideration insofar as it has sometimes been allowed to colour modern readings of Maurice's text. When Leo VI (886–912) adapted the *Strategicon* in

[43] Dennis (1984) variously renders these passages. At 15 he translates the phrase ἄθροισμα ἤγουν δροῦγγος (*Strat.* 1.3.14) as "an assemblage or grouping"; while at 23, εἰς δρούγγους ἤτοι μέρη καὶ μοίρας διαφόρους πρός τὴν χρείαν ἔτασσον (*Strat.* 2.1.19–20) becomes "droungoi, divisions, and moiras of varying strength"; and at 25, εἰς μοίρας καὶ μέρη ἤτοι τοὺς λεγομένους δρούγγους διαφόρους (*Strat.* 2.2.2–3) is "divided into moiras and divisions, or the so-called droungoi, of varying size." At 99, "a single droungos or meros" (*Strat.* 9.3.103–104).

[44] See Haldon 1984: 210–212, 385–386 for comments on informal and official terminology.

[45] *Strat.* 12.B.20.32–42: Τοὺς δὲ ψιλοὺς μὴ ὡς τοὺς σκουτάτους ἐπ' εὐθείας τάττεσθαι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ δρούγγους, τουτέστι τρεῖς ἢ τέσσαρας μὲν ψιλοὺς ἀκοντιστὰς ἐπιφερομένους καὶ σκουτάρια αὐτῶν, ἵνα, εἰ χρεία γένηται, καὶ σκουτεύουσι καὶ ἀκοντίζουσιν οἱ αὐτοί, καὶ ἕνα δὲ τοξότην ἔχειν ὑπ' αὐτῶν φυλάττεσθαι δυνάμενον. Τοὺς δὲ τοιούτους δρούγγους, ὡς εἴρηται, μὴ ἐπὶ μιᾶς παρατάξεως ἢ ἐπ' εὐθείας τὴν ὁδοιπορίαν ποιεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐφεξῆς, μὴ ἐσπαρμένως . . . .

the early tenth century to produce his own *Tactica* he retained verbatim much of Maurice's text concerning organization and command structures, replacing terms and troop numbers where appropriate. Perhaps the clearest indication that the term δροῦγγος had lost its earlier generic sense of "combination," "unit," or "group" is Leo's reworking of Maurice's treatment of small-scale "group tactics" for infantry, where Leo (or his editor[s]) deletes the phrase κατὰ δρούγγους, as this use of δροῦγγος to mean "groups" of three or four men was incompatible with contemporary usage.[46] By this date δροῦγγος referred only to a specific, permanent unit within the organisational structure of the Byzantine army. This δροῦγγος amounted to around a thousand men, comprising five *banda* (βάνδα) of 200 men, each under its own *comes* (κόμης).[47] Leo's δροῦγγος thus equates to what Maurice termed a μοῖρα. In turn several of these "new" δροῦγγοι made up a *tourma* (τοῦρμα) of varying strength, which equates to Maurice's μέρος.[48] The fact that it is Maurice's μοῖρα, and not his μέρος, that is later

[46] The various recensions of Leo's *Tactica* are of no concern here; it is sufficient to note that the phrase is deleted from all manuscripts. Quotations below are from the unfinished Vári 1917–21, up to book 14.38, and thereafter from the complete but defective edition in *PG* 107 (with earlier parallel passages cited in parenthesis). Maurice *Strat.* 12.B.20.32–34, Τοὺς δὲ ψιλοὺς μὴ ὡς τοὺς σκουτάτους ἐπ' εὐθείας τάττεσθαι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ δρούγγους, τουτέστι τρεῖς ἢ τέσσαρας μὲν ψιλοὺς ἀκοντιστὰς ἐπιφερομένους καὶ σκουτάρια αὐτῶν becomes Leo, *Tactica* 9.63 (*PG* 9.64, col. 784) Τοὺς δὲ ψιλοὺς μὴ τάττε ἐπ' εὐθείας καθὼς τοὺς σκουτάτους, ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύο ἢ τρεῖς ἢ τέσσαρας μὲν ψιλοὺς ἀκοντιστὰς τάξεις ἐπιφερομένους καὶ τὰ σκουτάρια αὐτῶν. This is probably an editorial deletion, as the subsequent passage in Leo begins oddly with the phrase "*drungi* of this type" (Τοὺς δὲ τοιούτους δρούγγους). This led Vári, mistakenly I believe, to restore the deleted phrase. At the very least it is safe to say that the passage confused later readers. The so-called "third recension" of Leo's *Tactica* or *Recensio Constantiniana* (in fact a detached section [chapters 1–55] of the *Tactica* of Nicephorus Uranus, written ca 1010, which paraphrased Leo's *Tactica* almost in its entirety), further reworked the text for a contemporary readership: μὴ ποιῇς δὲ τοὺς ψιλοὺς ὅλους εἰς μίαν παραταγήν, ὥς καὶ τοὺς σκουταράτους, ἀλλὰ μίσγε δύο, τρεῖς ἢ τέσσαρας ψιλοὺς ῥιπταριστὰς ἔχοντας καὶ τὰ σκουτάρια αὐτῶν. For text, see apparatus to Vári 1917–21: 1.255; for identification, Dain 1937: 40–46.

[47] Leo 4.11 (Vári = *PG* 4.9, col. 701D): Δρουγγάριος δὲ λέγεται ὁ μιᾶς μοίρας ἄρχων, ἥτις ὑπὸ τὸ μέρος τοῦ τουρμάρχου τάττεται. μέρος γάρ ἐστιν ἡ τοῦρμα, τὸ ἐκ τριῶν μοιρῶν ἤγουν δρούγγων συγκείμενον ἄθροισμα, μοῖρα δέ ἐστιν ἤτοι δροῦγγος τὸ ἐκ ταγμάτων ἤτοι ἀριθμῶν ἢ βάνδων τῶν λεγομένων κομήτων συγκείμενον πλῆθος; Leo 4.44 (Vári = *PG* 4.42, col. 708C): εἰς χιλιαρχίας ἤτοι μοίρας, τὰς λεγομένας δρούγγους . . . μοιράρχας . . . τοὺς λεγομένους δρουγγαρίους, οὕς ποτε χιλιάρχους ἐκάλουν οἱ παλαιοί; Leo 4.45 (Vári = *PG* 4.43, col. 708D): τὰς δὲ μοίρας ταύτας ἤτοι τοὺς δρούγγους συνάξεις εἰς μέρη ἤγουν τούρμας; Leo 4.47 (Vári = *PG* 4.45, col. 709A): χρὴ δέ, ὡς εἴρηται, μήτε τάγμα πλέον τῶν τετρακοσίων ἀνδρῶν γίνεσθαι ἤγουν τὸ τοῦ κόμητος βάνδον, μήτε δροῦγγον πλέον τῶν τρισχιλίων, μήτε τοῦρμαν πλέον τῶν ἑξακισχιλίων (repeated Leo 18.149 (Vári = *PG* col. 988); Leo 13.4 (Vári = *PG* 13.3, col. 844): Συνάξεις δὲ ἐπὶ σχολῆς τὸν στρατὸν κατὰ δρουγγους καὶ κατὰ τούρμας; Leo 18.143 (*PG* col. 984), καὶ πρὸς τοὺτοις ποιήσας ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ πλευρᾷ μακρόθεν τάγματα δύο ἀπὸ σ', ὥστε εἰς ἐνέδρας γενέσθαι, ἦγουν ἐγκρύμματα ἔνθεν κακεῖθεν τῆς σῆς παρατάξεως ἑστῶτας, ἀθρόως δὲ, καὶ τὸ λεγόμενον δρουγγιστὶ ἐκπηδῶντας, καὶ κατὰ τῶν πλευρῶν τῶν πολεμίων ἐπερχομένους.

[48] The Byzantine term *tourma* (τοῦρμα), meaning a "division" of 5,000 to 6,000 men, itself poses several etymological and historical problems, given the earlier Roman usage of *turma* to mean a squadron of between thirty and thirty-two horsemen.

officially known as δροῦγγος further argues against the conventional notion that Maurice "frequently uses *drouggos* to mean *meros*." This middle Byzantine δροῦγγος was commanded by a *droungarios* (δρουγγάριος), who thus supplanted the generic *moirarch* (μοιράρχης), as by a similar process Maurice's *ad hoc*, temporary and terminologically artificial *merarch* (μεράρχης) was replaced by the official and permanent title of *tourmarch* (τουρμάρχης).[49] In both cases, the δροῦγγος and τοῦρμα were permanent structures whose commanding officers had competence in fixed geographical regions. The same organizational framework and terminology are found in the early to mid tenth-century *Sylloge Tacticorum*. With certain organizational changes, this remained the standard unit structure in the Byzantine army until the later tenth century, when it appeared to fall into disuse.[50]

This post-sixth-century transition in the meaning of δροῦγγος appears to be a logical progression from Maurice's non-specific usage of the word in the sense of a "grouping together," "banding," or "thronging," which would naturally make δροῦγγος applicable to the later *permanent* "brigading" together of different units, and the process perhaps merely saw the term change its status from semi-official or vernacular to official and "institutionalised."[51] This model for terminological transition is further suggested by the fact that Maurice never uses the term δρουγγάριος, nor is it attested in any earlier text, but the rank first appears in the context of 626, within a generation of the *Strategicon*. It is unclear whether δρουγγάριος represents a transliteration of an unattested Latin *drungarius*, or was formed independently from δροῦγγος, but the latter seems more probable. Either way, it is very unlikely that this office was "created" in the brief intervening period—there is no evidence for military "reform" at this date—and is more probably a case of a vernacular and rather non-specific designation for a "group commander" gradually acquiring official usage and sanction. Since δρουγγάριος is attested as a permanent rank in sigillographic sources from the seventh century, it appears that the "institutionalisation" of the terms δροῦγγος and δρουγγάριος took place at that time.[52] For comparative purposes, a historical parallel may

[49] For these developments and the variation in terminology see Haldon 1999: 108–215; 2000; McGeer 1991. See Haldon 1990: 249 (in text C.447, 654) for the survival of *mer(i)arches* in certain circumstances.

[50] *Sylloge Tacticorum* 35.2 (Dain 1938: 56): Τουρμάρχης δὲ ὁ τρεῖς δρούγγους ὑφ' ἑαυτὸν ἔχων. Δρουγγάριος δὲ ὁ δρούγγου ἄρχων ἑνός, εἴη δ' ἂν δροῦγγος τὸ μέχρι τῶν τρισχιλίων ἀνδρῶν σύστημα, οὔτε δὲ τῶν τρισχιλίων ἐπέκεινα εἴη ἂν δροῦγγος, οὔτε μὴν τῶν χιλίων ἔλαττον. See Haldon 1999: 115–116; Treadgold 1995: 102–113.

[51] See the comments on terminological currency and literary register by Haldon (1984: 110–112, 210–211; 1990: 174, 249).

[52] A δρουγγάριος first appears in the *Chronicon Paschale* entry for 626 (731.5), Θέοδοτος ὁ μεγαλοπρεπέστατος δρουγγάριος, written ca 630. See also ps.-Sebeos *History* 44 (144) in Thomson, Howard-Johnston, and Greenwood 1999: 1:109 for Smbat Bagratuni as *drungar*, in the context of 645/6. Interestingly, the first attestation of *tourmarch* is also in the context of 626/7, though in an early ninth-century work; see Theophanes, *Chron.* 325.3, for George τουρμάρχης τῶν Ἀρμενιάκων.

be observed in the etymology of the modern English word "platoon," for long the standard official terminology for a unit of soldiers within the administrative structure of the army (often a quarter of a company), but originally a vernacular word for literally a "little ball" or "knot" of men, derived from the French *peloton*, diminutive of *pelote*. The same transition to official unit title may be observed in the case of "squadron," originally designating any "square-shaped" deployment (Italian *squadrone*; Latin *squadra*).[53] Alongside this process of "institutionalisation" there is some evidence for a continued popular usage. A ninth-century text still appears to use δροῦγγος in the generic sense of "band" or "host." Theophanes describes two Bulgar kings invading the empire's lower Danubian provinces "with a host or gathering of Bulgars" (μετὰ πλήθους Βουλγάρων καὶ δρούγγου).[54] Assuming the text of the *Chronographia* is not corrupt at this point, this passage suggests that δροῦγγος continued to be used at different linguistic registers even in the Middle Byzantine period.

ΔΡΟΥΓΓΙΣΤΙ

The cognate adverb δρουγγιστί used throughout the *Strategicon* clearly indicates a specific tactical method used by Roman cavalry, though its precise nature remains disputed. Scheffer, the *editor princeps* of the treatise, attempted to deduce the nature of δροῦγγος and δρουγγιστί on the basis of Du Cange's lexical entry. This includes a misplaced reference to an identical but unrelated, and apparently "Galatian," word δροῦγγος, meaning ῥύγχος or μυκτήρ—"snout" or "nose." Scheffer consequently concluded that Maurice's δροῦγγος "habuisse frontem mucronatum ad similitudinem proboscidis"; that is to say, it was a pointed, "nose-shaped" tactical formation.[55] The possible similarity between troops deployed δρουγγιστί and earlier "wedge" formations will be considered

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See generally Haldon 1984: 210–211; 1999: 107; see McGeer 1991 for continuing changes in the meaning and importance of the rank.

[53] Similarly "troop," via French *troupe*, from the early mediaeval Latin *troppus*, meaning a flock or herd, perhaps ultimately of Germanic origin.

[54] Theophanes, *Chron.* 217.26–27: Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει ἐκίνησαν οἱ Βουλγάρεις δύο ῥῆγες μετὰ πλήθους Βουλγάρων καὶ δρούγγου εἰς τὴν Σκυθίαν καὶ Μυσίαν. Mango and Scott (1997: 317, n. 3) note that the text is uncertain, with καὶ δρούγγου omitted in two MSS (d and h). This perhaps reflects no more than later scribal confusion regarding this word. De Boor's emendation (1883: *ad loc.*) to the personal names Βούλγαρ καὶ Δρούγγ (i.e., δύο ῥῆγες) is unconvincing.

[55] Scheffer 1664: 437. Du Cange (1688: s.v. δροῦγγος, cols. 1657–58) cites St Epiphanius' *Adversus Haereses* (written ca 375) for his etymology of the word Τασκοδρουγῖται, a Montanist heretical sect based in Phrygia. For text, see Epiphanius, *Panarion* 48.14.4: δροῦγγος δὲ μυκτὴρ εἴτ' οὖν ῥύγχος καλεῖται ... Τασκοδρουγῖται, τουτέστιν πασσαλορυγχῖται. The word Τασκοδρουγῖται appears to be Galatian rather than Phrygian; the element rendered here δροῦγγος probably deriving from the Celtic **trugna*, "nose"; see Walde and Hofmann 1938–54: 374; Freeman 2001: 13–14. Note that in the editions of Scheffer 1664: (unpaginated = 540) and Dennis 1981: 178–179 (as well as Dennis 1984: 47) the "concealed *drungus*" is represented in the diagrams at *Strat.* 3.10 by a number of circles arranged in a triangle with its apex towards the rear. This diagrammatic depiction is not supported by any manuscript evidence and misleads the modern reader. It appears to be Scheffer's invention,

below, and as a general characterization Scheffer may well have been on the right lines, but his etymological explanation was hopeless. Du Cange himself defined δρουγγιστί rather cursorily as "per drungos, confertim, glomeratim."[56] Mihăescu, presumably in accordance with his mistaken belief that δροῦγγος was a synonym for μέρος, assumed that "to deploy δρουγγιστί" (δρουγγιστί τάσσειν) or "to charge δρουγγιστί" (δρουγγιστὶ ὁρμᾶν) meant deployment in very large formations or manoeuvres at divisional level—"en masse, en grand nombre, par grandes unités."[57] Mazzucchi defined δρουγγιστί as "in ordine sparso," that is tactical deployment in a loose or open order; while Dennis variously renders δρουγγιστί as "irregular formation," "loose formation," and "in irregular groups."[58] Dagron, by contrast, understands the term as "combat en escadrons agglutinés," a manoeuvring in conjoined units deployed "in a swarm" ("en essaim") rather than "en ligne" or "en coin." He regards this deployment as an instance of *mimétisme* of "Scythian" peoples and suggests a recent tactical borrowing from the Avars.[59] There is therefore no consensus on whether the term δρουγγιστί refers to a large or small formation, whether in "close order" or "loose order," and nothing has been written regarding its function or operation.

Unfortunately Maurice never explicitly describes what ἡ δρουγγιστί (τάξις) was, though he does say what it was not and further hints at its function. In his exposition of cavalry manoeuvres and drill Maurice writes:

> It is necessary to draw up and train the unit not only in a linear formation (ἐπὶ μῆκος ὀρδινεύειν), as the diagram shows—for this happens to be useful only for a main engagement or charge—but also to deploy it δρουγγιστί and for it to charge in a straight line and in different circling manoeuvres, first in withdrawals and counter-attacks, then in surprise raids against the enemy, and furthermore in giving rapid support to those in need.[60]

Later Maurice explains that troops assigned to ambushes "are more appropriately deployed δρουγγιστί rather than in a full battle line, that is ordered as *decarchia* and *pentarchia*" (ἁρμοδιωτέρως μᾶλλον δρουγγιστὶ τάσσονται, ἤπερ ἐπὶ μακρᾶς παρατάξεως, τουτέστι κατ' ὄρδινον δεκαρχίας ἢ πενταρχίας). Here he contrasts "to deploy δρουγγιστί" and deployment in a formal line,

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later copied by Dennis. Mihăescu (1970: 126–129) and Mazzucchi (1981: 118–120) do not print this symbol.

[56] Du Cange 1688: s.v. δρουγγιστί

[57] Mihăescu 1968: 496, in keeping with his earlier noted misunderstanding (above, 108, n. 37).

[58] Mazzucchi 1981: 127: "quindi rivoltarsi e contrattaccare, ovviamente ormai in ordine sparso (δρουγγιστί)." A few lines later Mazzucchi describes the *cursores* as also "caricano in ordine sparso," though they were undoubtedly deployed differently from troops arrayed δρουγγιστί.

[59] Dagron 1987: 210; 1993: 280.

[60] *Strat.* 3.5.63–69: "Οτι οὐ μόνον, ὡς ἡ καταγραφὴ δηλοῖ, ἐπὶ μῆκος ὀρδινεύνειν καὶ γυμνάζειν ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι τὸ τάγμα, τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς μόνην συμβολὴν καὶ ὥθησιν χρήσιμον τυγχάνει, ἀλλὰ καὶ δρουγγιστὶ τάσσειν καὶ ἐξελαύνειν ἐπ' εὐθείας καὶ κύκλους διαφόρους, πρῶτον μὲν διὰ τὰς ὑποχωρήσεις καὶ ἀντιστροφάς, εἶτα διὰ τὰς αἰφνιδίους κατὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐφόδους, λοιπὸν δὲ καὶ διὰ τὸ συντόμως τοῖς δεομένοις ἐπιβοηθεῖν. See also comments of Scheffer (1664: 436–437).

in which the cavalry troopers were drawn up in their *decarchies* or *pentarchies*, the ten- and five-man units which comprised respectively the files of a ten- or five-deep battle line.[61] He explains that the two deployments possessed different tactical capabilities, for while deployment "in a full battle line" (ἐπὶ μακρᾶς παρατάξεως)

> is impressive and more effective and better ordered and engages in combat in safety, it is slow and not easily manoeuvred when required, as it has only one purpose. Deployment δρουγγιστί has the opposite character, for it can both easily conceal itself in ambush, for which a small location suffices, and quickly manoeuvres according to requirements.[62]

Maurice reiterates the point: "For in these (operations) the distinction between the two (deployments), as has been said, is that while one is for engaging in combat effectively and safely, the other is for rapid support and pursuits and sudden sallies and causing confusion" (Ἐν τούτοις γάρ ἐστιν ἡ διαφορά, ὡς εἴρηται, ἀμφοτέρων, ὅτι ἡ μὲν τὸ ἰσχυρῶς καὶ ἀσφαλῶς μάχεσθαι ἔχει, ἡ δὲ τὸ ὀξέως τὰς βοηθείας καὶ διώξεις, καὶ ἀθρόως τὰς ἐπελεύσεις καὶ ταραχὰς ποιεῖσθαι).[63] Maurice thus employs δρουγγιστί τάσσειν to describe troops arrayed in a non-linear deployment, as opposed to more "regular" or formal linear formations appropriate to the main charge in a pitched battle. This explanation of δρουγγιστί τάσσειν recalls Vegetius' *globus*, which is likewise distinct from the main battle line (*qui a sua acie separatus*), and lacks a fixed position (*vagantes globi*). To the extent that *drungus* equates to *globus* in Vegetius' *Epitoma*, the distributive adverb δρουγγιστί, that is "in *drungi*" or "as *drungi*" corresponds to the Latin *globatim*, and is consistent with other terminological developments in tactical vocabulary, such as *cuneus* and *cuneatim*.[64]

Maurice discusses at some length the possible applications of cavalry arrayed δρουγγιστί or "in *drungi*"; indeed Book 4, "On Ambushes" (Περὶ Ἐνέδρας), devotes a whole chapter to "How the men dispatched on ambushes and raids are to be deployed in *drungi*" (Περὶ τοῦ δρουγγιστὶ τάσσεσθαι τοὺς εἰς ἐνέδραν καὶ ἐφόδους πεμπομένους). Maurice's phrase "as *drungi*" (κατὰ δρούγγους) noted above to describe infantry deployed in what modern military parlance

[61] *Strat.* 4.5.7–8; cf. 17–18: κατὰ δεκαρχίαν ἢ πενταρχίαν τάσσεσθαι. The reference to *decarchs* and *pentarchs* is a periphrastic expression meaning simply "in files." A *decarchia* of ten cavalrymen included the *decarch*, its commander, and the *pentarch*, his immediate subordinate. These could be arrayed either ten deep, with the *decarch* as the first man in the file; or five deep, with both these officers in the front rank, so that the whole unit thus had twice the frontage.

[62] *Strat.* 4.5.8–12: Αὕτη γὰρ κομπὴ μὲν καὶ ἰσχυροτέρα καὶ εὐτακτοτέρα ἐστὶ καὶ ἀσφαλῶς τὰς συμβολὰς ἐν ταῖς μάχαις ποιεῖται, βραδέα δὲ καὶ δυσμετάθετός ἐστι ταῖς χρείαις ὡς μονότροπος. Ἡ δὲ δρουγγιστὶ τἀναντία ἔχει, καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐνέδραις γάρ εὐκόλως λανθάνειν δύναται, ὀλίγῳ τόπῳ ἀρκουμένη, καὶ συντόμως μετατίθεται πρὸς τὰς χρείας.

[63] *Strat.* 4.5.19–22.

[64] See, for example, Amm. Marc. 27.9.6: "in Isauria bands of brigands were overrunning neighbouring districts" (*at in Isauria, globatim per vicina digressi praedones*).

might call small-scale "group tactics" is of some relevance. Just as light infantry deployed κατὰ δρούγγους were ideal for operations in difficult terrain, the tactical flexibility and manoeuvrability of ἡ δρουγγιστί (τάξις) were suited to ambushes, surprise attacks, stratagems, supporting roles, pursuits, and reconnaissance operations of small cavalry forces, especially on terrain that would quickly disrupt linear deployments. Maurice is emphatic that frequent practice is the key to such tactical arrangements, with each unit undergoing separate training, but he recognises that a drill manual is not the best vehicle to teach such irregular tactics and recommends *ad hoc* and improvised training arrangements to perfect these manoeuvres and accustom all cavalry units to fight δρουγγιστί, almost instinctively.[65] Interestingly, he dismisses the attitudes of "certain reluctant and over cautious men" (τινας τῶν ὀκνηροτέρων καὶ ἀσφαλεστέρων), suggesting perhaps that these tactics were not sufficiently practised at the time of writing.[66]

The term δρουγγιστί or "in *drungi*" therefore usefully summarised small-scale "group tactics" in a range of "irregular" operations. Even on the battlefield, however, deployment "in *drungi*" had a significant role. The essence of the tactical system Maurice outlines for Roman cavalry is a series of shocks in which successive waves sought to maintain the momentum of the attack in the highly fluid conditions of mounted warfare. Maurice characterized the "see-saw" nature of cavalry warfare as a sequence of "pursuits and counter-pursuits" (διώξεις καὶ ἀντιδιώξεις), an image confirmed by the reports of contemporary historians.[67] Ideally, only when one battle line had made several attempts upon the enemy, each time falling back and renewing the assault, did it withdraw towards its reserves, passing through intervals to the rear where it then rallied and attacked again. In these circumstances cavalry units would quickly lose all regular formation and therefore regrouped and attacked δρουγγιστί.[68]

[65] See Maurice *Strat.* 4.5. Cf. 4.3.78–83 for an example of its use in an ambush; 3.5.63–75 for comments on training. For general remarks on ambushes, surprise attacks, and reconnaissance, see *Strat.* 2.5; 3.16; 4.1–4; 7.A.3, 5, 12, B.8; 9.1, 5.

[66] *Strat.* 4.5.27–46. The tactical supremacy of an ordered battle line was a fundamental tenet of Roman warfare, to which Maurice's advocacy of "irregular" tactics by detached groups may have appeared inimical; see, for example, the rhetorical contrast of Ammianus (31.15.15): "they no longer fought with any order, but charging forward in detached groups—a sign of final desperation" (*nullo ordine iam sed per procursus pugnabatur et globos, quod desperationis erat signum extremae*).

[67] *Strat.* 3.15.14. See Procop. *Pers.* 1.15.15; *Goth.* 2.2.11–12, 4.8.20; Theoph. Sim. *Hist.* 2.3.10–12; George Pisidia *Exp. Pers.* 153–162. This feature of mounted combat was itself, however, something of a *topos* of ancient battle narratives; cf., for example, Tac. *Ann.* 6.35: *modo equestris proelii more frontis et terga vices*. See also remarks at Goldsworthy 1996: 235–241.

[68] *Strat.* 3.5.46–48: "And they regroup, sometimes in the interval[s] in that line, sometimes in the area between the lines, and together they charge forward in *drungi* against the enemy" (Καὶ ὁτὲ μὲν ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ διαλείμματι ταύτης, ὁτὲ δὲ ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ αὐτῆς ἐξελίσσεσθαι καὶ ἅμα δρουγγιστὶ

Identifying instances of the deployment that Maurice calls δρουγγιστί in contemporary historical narratives is again problematic. This style of combat rarely offered a suitable literary vehicle for Roman authors seeking to provide their readers with a dramatic set-piece battle sequence. The classicising idiom of the historical genre also creates basically cosmetic differences between military narratives and the technical content and vernacular language of the *Strategicon*. It is perhaps possible, however, to recognise the application of δρουγγιστί in late Roman histories, as a flexible irregular grouping used in ambushes and surprise attacks, and especially important in outflanking manoeuvres on the battlefield. It is evident that these sorts of irregular cavalry tactics increased in frequency and effectiveness in late antiquity, and, given the general obscurity of much of the fifth century, the clearest examples date from the beginning of the sixth century. In Procopius' description of the battle of Dara in 530, for instance, the allied force of 300 Heruli cavalry concealed behind a hill to charge out upon the Persian flank recall Maurice's troops deployed δρουγγιστί in an ambush beside the Roman army's main battle line; indeed Maurice elsewhere specifies that allied troops, "who should be deployed in their customary manner" (ὡς ἔθος ἔχουσιν οὕτως δεῖ τάσσειν), are often best suited to precisely this role.[69] At the battle of Satala in 530, the Roman general Sittas similarly concealed 1000 men behind a hill.[70] At Taginae in 552 Narses stationed a force of 1,000 cavalry behind his left flank ready to charge around to the rear of the Ostrogothic infantry should an opportunity arise, and again at Casilinum in 554 he hid the cavalry on the Roman left in woodland.[71] Procopius also provides vivid depictions of Roman cavalry engaged in small units in successful skirmishing operations, including on very broken terrain at Oenochalacon in Armenia in 539, and most impressively during the Ostrogothic siege of Rome 537/8.[72]

The general character and function of δρουγγιστί are therefore reasonably clear; it is its precise appearance and internal arrangement, such as its actual shape and the positioning of the officers, that remain elusive. This is, of course, in some measure due to the *ad hoc* and flexible nature of the deployment. In this respect, however, middle Byzantine texts are again of some use in elucidating the *Strategicon*, or at the very least indicate what later military writers, employing substantially the same vocabulary, understood by the term δρουγγιστί. On the whole the *Tactica* of Leo VI follows Maurice verbatim in the use and meaning of δρουγγιστί, but Leo inserts certain glosses that provide additional information as to its character: "in *drungi* or closely-packed" (δρουγγιστὶ ἤγουν πυκνῶς); "in

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ὁρμᾶν κατὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν). Cf. the same δρουγγιστὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἐπέρχεσθαι at 3.12.15–21, and similar arrangements at 6.2.

[69] Procop. *Pers.* 1.14.33, 39–40; Maurice *Strat.* 2.6.33–35. See the similar deployment of Hunnic allied cavalry at Tricamerum in 533: Procop. *Vand.* 2.3.7.

[70] Procop. *Pers.* 1.15.9–17.

[71] Procop. *Goth.* 4.31.7; Agath. *Hist.* 2.8.3.

[72] Procop. *Pers.* 2.3.19–27; *Goth.* 1.27.

drungi or as a mass" (δρουγγιστὶ ἤγουν ὡς μᾶζα); "they deploy in *drungi* or massed close together without files, not as in a full battle line" (δρουγγιστὶ τάσσωνται ἤγουν ὁμοῦ ὡς μᾶζα ἄνευ ὀρδίνων οὐχὶ δὲ ἐπὶ μακρᾶς παρατάξεως), or "in *drungi*, which is close together (but) without formation" (δρουγγιστὶ ὅ ἐστιν ὁμοῦ ἄνευ τάξεως).[73] The near-contemporary *Sylloge Tacticorum* adds the useful comment, interestingly of Byzantine infantry:

> When the ... infantry units are not arrayed in formation or in files, but irregularly, sometimes they extend their line to a greater length, but at other times, drawing themselves together in *drungi* or as a mass, they launch attacks upon the enemy.[74]

These additional definitions indicate how later Byzantine writers, familiar with the technical terminology employed by Maurice, attempted to clarify the word δρουγγιστί for their readers. That δρουγγιστί was a deployment "not as in a full battle line" (οὐχὶ δὲ ἐπὶ μακρᾶς παρατάξεως) and "without formation" (ἄνευ τάξεως) or "without files" (ἄνευ ὀρδίνων) is already clear from the *Strategicon*. That it was also "closely-packed" (πυκνῶς) and "as a mass" (ὡς μᾶζα) is new information. In the first instance, Greek authors of both military narratives and technical treatises, in whose conventions Leo was well versed, had traditionally framed their descriptions of non-linear deloyments, and especially "wedges," primarily in terms of their "closing ranks" (πύκνωσις), or the "compactness" (πυκνότης) of their frontages, or other cognate expressions, and these terms of reference were still current in Leo's day.[75] Second, Leo's word μάζα appears to derive from the Latin *massa*, originally a generic "mass" or "lump," and later by

[73] Leo, *Tactica* 7.32 (*PG* 7.37, col. 744C) [= Maurice 3.5.46–8]: καὶ ποτὲ μὲν ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ διαλείμματι ταύτης, ποτὲ δὲ ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ αὐτῆς ἐξελίσσεσθαι, καὶ ἅμα δρουγγιστὶ ἤγουν ὁμοῦ ὁρμᾶν κατὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν; 7.35 (*PG* 7.40, col. 745A) [= Maurice 3.5.63–65]: Οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐπὶ μῆκος ὀρδινεύειν καὶ γυμνάζειν ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ δρουγγιστὶ τάσσοντας γυμνάζειν ...; 7.42 (*PG* 7.47–48, col. 748B–C with variations) Δέον δὲ καὶ πλαγιοφύλακας καὶ ὑπερκεραστὰς ... ἰδίως μετ' αὐτῶν δρουγγιστὶ ἤγουν πυκνῶς καὶ ὁμοῦ ἐμπιπτόντων γυμνάζειν ... εἶθ' οὕτως οἱ συνόντες αὐτοῖς δρουγγιστὶ ἤγουν ὡς μᾶζα, ὁμου, λανθανόντως αὐτοὶ μόνοι ἄφνω ὑπεξερχόμενοι μετὰ ἐλασίας ὀξείας ... [πυκνῶς is πυκνοὺς in mss MWAV; ἐμπιπτόντων .. λανθανόντων is Vari's speculation for mss MWAV ἐμπίπτοντας .. .λανθανόντως; the phrase ὡς μᾶζα is omitted from mss AP^1V]; 14.57 (*PG* col. 868A–B) Ἀσφαλὲς δὲ ὑπολαμβάνομεν, ἵνα οἱ πρὸς ἐγκρύμματα πεμπόμενοι ... ἁρμοδιόν ἐστιν, ἵνα μᾶλλον δρουγγιστὶ τάσσωνται, ἤγουν ὁμοῦ ὡς μᾶζα ἄνευ ὀρδίνων οὐχὶ δὲ ἐπὶ μακρᾶς παρατάξεως, τουτέστι κατ' ὄρδινον ἀκίας δεκαρχίας ἢ πενταρχίας; 18.148 (*PG* col. 988A), οὐκ ἀεὶ συντεταγμένοι στήσονται, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὴν χρείαν, ποτὲ μὲν οὕτως ἤτοι δρουγγιστὶ ἐπελεύσονται; 18.144 (*PG* col. 984D), δρουγγιστὶ ὅ ἐστιν ὁμου ἄνευ τάξεως [The *PG* text has ἀνεντάξεως but ἄνευ τάξεως must be meant. The parallel Latin translation reads "confertim sine acie"]. See also Kulakovskii 1902: 8, n. 1.

[74] *Sylloge Tacticorum* 45.10 (Dain 1938: 72):Ἐπει δὲ τὰ ... τῶν πεζῶν τάγματα οὐκ ἐν τάξει καὶ κατὰ στοίχους, ἀλλ' ἀσυντάκτως ἐπίασι καὶ ποτὲ μὲν εἰς μῆκος πλεῖστον ἐκτείνονται, ποτὲ δ' αὖ συστελλόμενοι δρουγγιστὶ καὶ ὡς μᾶζα τὰς κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἐφόδους ποιοῦνται.

[75] See, for example, Diod. Sic. 15.55.4; Arr. *Tact.* 11.1–3. See Devine 1983: 204–206, 211. The interpolated recension of Aelian's *Tactica Theoria* (47.4 = Dain 1946: fr. L.4), produced by tenth-century scholiasts using other, now lost Hellenistic treatises, includes the remark that Epaminondas "compacted his army into a wedge" (πυκνώσας εἰς ἔμβολον τὸ στράτευμα).

extension a "crowd" or "throng."[76] These glosses indicate that far from the "loose order" which usually serves to define δρουγγιστί, it entailed on the contrary the deployment of a cavalry unit in a compact "mass" without "formation" (τάξις), that is to say, its members were not drawn up in formal ranks and files.

THE ANTECEDENTS AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ΔΡΟΥΓΓΙΣΤΙ

It has generally been assumed that in using the word δρουγγιστί Maurice was describing a new kind of deployment and tactics, but the link between changing terminology and tactical innovation is not straightforward, especially when it is a matter, as here, of vocabulary in a vernacular idiom. While much remains obscure, it is possible to identify tactics and formations in the military theory and practice of earlier periods of antiquity which closely equate to what Maurice calls δρουγγιστί τάσσειν or ἡ δρουγγιστί (τάξις). There follow some broad observations which seek to emphasise the overall character and operation of certain earlier cavalry formations rather than their precise appearance or formation, and less still their direct link to Maurice's δρουγγιστί. The close-order, non-linear tactical formations attested for late classical and Hellenistic cavalry were the "rhomboid" (ῥομβοειδής τάξις) and the "wedge" (ἐμβολοειδής or σφηνοειδής τάξις, ἔμβολον, *cuneus*). Greek authors applied the term "wedge" (ἔμβολον) to a number of battlefield formations which varied considerably in size and composition; to be clear, the concern here is only for the small-scale deployment and manoeuvring of an individual cavalry unit in a solid Δ-shaped formation.[77] This formation was discussed in earlier *tactica*, now represented by the extant works of Asclepiodotus (first century B.C.), Aelian (ca A.D. 106–113), and Arrian (ca A.D. 136), all three part of a continuous, if uncertain, textual tradition derived from a lost Hellenistic archetype.[78] The cavalry "wedge" was traditionally believed to have originated among the Thracians and "Scythians," from whom Philip II introduced the formation into the Macedonian cavalry.[79] The incidence and function of the cavalry "wedge" however are now unclear; in the surviving *tactica* it is schematised into a rather geometric representation, the practicality of which may be doubted, while historical narratives, despite the assertions of modern scholarship, in fact contain no evidence for its actual deployment by Greek or

[76] See Du Cange 1688: s.v. μάζα. The only other use of this word in Leo's *Tactica* is in the literal sense of a mass of iron comprising a projectile employed in naval warfare; see Leo 19.7 (*PG* col. 992): σίδηρα βαρέα, οἷον μάζας ξιφοειδεῖς, δι' ὧν ἤ τὴν ναῦν διαθρύψουσιν ("iron weights, such as sword-shaped masses, using which they shatter the ship").

[77] Devine (1975; 1983) distinguishes the different meanings of ἔμβολον in the historical sources for the later fourth century B.C. ranging from small-scale Δ-shaped cavalry formations to grand tactical Λ-shaped deployments of infantry or combined infantry and cavalry.

[78] Asclep. 7.2–3, 6–7; Ael. 18.1, 4, 19.5, 40.2–6; Arr. *Tact.* 16.1, 6–8, 17.3. On the vexed question of the relationship between these three texts, together with the so-called *Glossarium Militare*, see Förster 1877: 426–449; Dain 1945: 26–40; Stadter 1978: 117–128; Devine 1995.

[79] Ael. 18.4; Arr. *Tact.* 16.6

Macedonian cavalry. Recent studies of the combat capabilities of ancient cavalry make it extremely doubtful that the "wedge" possessed the penetrative force or purpose conventionally assigned to it.[80] Of the three tactical treatises, Arrian's comments on the qualities of "wedge-shaped formations" (ἐμβολοειδεῖς τάξεις) are usually preferred to the texts of Aelian or Asclepiodotus, but it is important not to permit our knowledge of Arrian's actual experience of command to exaggerate the authority of this author, who was always more scholar than soldier.[81] Arrian writes:

> This formation seems useful because the leaders are deployed around the edge, and the front tapering to a point can easily break through any enemy formation, and permits it to make rapid wheeling manoeuvres and withdrawals. For square formations are difficult to manoeuvre; but that which projects to a point, even if it advances in depth, by wheeling upon the smallest movement of this leading point, the entire formation can manoeuvre dextrously.[82]

Aelian, drawing on the same Hellenistic source, has a similar text but with significant variations that cast some doubt on Arrian's expertise in this matter. Rather than Arrian's "front tapering to a point" (τὸ μέτωπον ἐς ὀξὺ ἀπολῆγον), Aelian's "wedge" has "a front that is somewhat narrow" (τὸ δὲ μέτωπον βραχύ τι γενόμενον), suggesting a compressed but not necessarily "pointed" front. Furthermore, while Arrian notes that the "wedge" can "easily break through any enemy formation" (εὐπετῶς πᾶσαν τάξιν πολεμίαν διακόπτειν), Aelian in the same place remarks that its narrow front renders it "serviceable for riding through any gaps that happen to appear" (τὴν διίππευσιν εὔχρηστον ποιεῖν διὰ τοῦ τυχόντος διαστήματος). That is to say, Aelian describes, much more plausibly, cavalry "wedges" exploiting gaps that might open up in the enemy line, rather than, as Arrian, their physical penetration of opposing formations.[83] That

[80] The only apparent reference to a small-scale tactical "wedge" (ἔμβολον) of cavalry in fact relates to Persians (Arr. *Anab.* 1.15.7), who, the Tacticians maintain, typically employed square cavalry formations (Ael. 18.5; Arr. *Tact.* 16.9). Cavalry "wedges" are frequently noted in the modern literature, though their geometric character is often taken too literally and their actual function is still rather unclear. The repeated concentration on their ability to "penetrate" enemy formations exaggerates the offensive capabilities of mounted troops. See Marsden 1964: 68–73 for an exceptionally literal interpretation; Griffith in Hammond and Griffith 1979: 413–414; Devine 1983: 201–203; Spence 1993: 103–104, 107–109, 177–179; Worley 1994: 30–32, 157–158, 167, 172; Gaebel 2002: 157–158, 181–182; McCall 2002: 22–23, 147–149.

[81] Bosworth 1972; Devine 1983: 202. Stadter (1978) demonstrates Arrian's scholarly improvements to the traditional format of the tactical manual, though at 127 considerably overstates Arrian's involvement in contemporary military developments.

[82] Arr. *Tact.* 16.7–8: ὠφέλιμος δὲ καὶ αὕτη δοκεῖ ἡ τάξις, ὅτι ἐν κύκλῳ οἱ ἡγεμόνες τεταγμένοι εἰσί, καὶ τὸ μέτωπον ἐς ὀξὺ ἀπολῆγον εὐπετῶς πᾶσαν τάξιν πολεμίαν διακόπτειν παρέχει, καὶ τὰς ἐπιστροφάς τε καὶ ἀναστροφὰς ὀξείας ποιεῖσθαι δίδωσιν. αἱ γὰρ τετράγωνοι τάξεις δυσπεριάγωγοί εἰσιν· ἡ δ' εἰς ὀξὺ προηγμένη, εἰ καὶ προϊοῦσα ἐς βάθος προχωρεῖ, ἀλλ' αὐτῇ γε τῇ ἀρχῇ δι' ὀλίγου ἐπιστρέφουσα τὴν πᾶσαν τάξιν εὐμαρῶς ἐξελισσομένην παρέχεται.

[83] Ael. 18.4.

Aelian has in both instances reproduced their common source more faithfully than Arrian is indicated by close verbal parallels with the corresponding passage in Asclepiodotus, who again drew on the same lost Hellenistic treatise.[84]

What these authors do suggest, however, is that the wedge possessed many of the same tactical attributes and capabilities Maurice allocates to δρουγγιστί, principally its distinction from linear formations, and in particular the ability of the "wedge" to wheel easily in any direction, as opposed to relatively unmanageable linear formations. Aelian's comment on cavalry "wedges" deftly exploiting potential gaps in the enemy line is reminiscent of Maurice's description of the "concealed *drungus*" slipping around the enemy's flank. This is not to say that δρουγγιστί was necessarily the same as this Hellenistic cavalry formation, but rather that they shared much in principle. For comparative purposes, the "wedge" offers some clues to the internal deployment of a *drungus*. The ancient tacticians maintained that in rhomboidic and wedge-shaped formations, "the best horsemen are stationed on the sides ... and the leaders at the corners" (τούς τε γὰρ ἀρίστους τῶν ἱππέων ἐπὶ τῶν πλευρῶν τοῦ ῥόμβου τάσσεσθαι καὶ κατὰ τὰς γωνίας τοὺς ἡγεμόνας).[85] In the case of the "wedge" rapid manoeuvring and tactical reaction were facilitated by the positioning of the officers and standard-bearers ahead of the other troops on a narrow frontage, so that "all eyes are fixed on the single squadron-commander, as is the case also in the flight of cranes" (πρὸς ἕνα τὸν ἰλάρχην ἀποβλεπόντων ἁπάντων, ὡς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς τῶν γεράνων πτήσεως γίνεται), and likewise "the rhomboid formation seemed more essential for manoeuvring because it inclines towards its leader" (ἔδοξε τὸ ῥομβοειδὲς ἀναγκαιότερον εἶναι πρὸς τὰς μεταγωγὰς διὰ τὴν πρὸς ἡγεμόνα νεῦσιν).[86] Similarly, "cavalry drawn up in this formation are able to wheel most quickly in each direction, with the least chance of being taken from the rear and on the flank" (καὶ τάχιστα μὲν πρὸς ἑκάστην ἐπιφάνειαν στρέφεσθαι δυναμένων τῶν ἐν τῷ σχήματι τούτῳ τεταγμένων ἱππέων, ἥκιστα δὲ κατὰ νώτου καὶ πλάγιον ἁλίσκεσθαι).[87]

No direct link should be sought between Maurice's δρουγγιστί deployment and these historically distant and rather artificial tactical discussions. Nevertheless, although little is known of earlier Roman cavalry deployment, similar tactics

[84] Asclep. 7.3: τὸ γὰρ μέτωπον τῶν ἐμβόλων βραχὺ γινόμενον ... ῥᾴστην ἐποίει τὴν διίππευσιν ("for since the front of a wedge is narrow ... it rides through with ease"). On the basis of Aelian's more expansive text, I find inaccurate the rendering of διίππευσις as "*charging through* the enemy ranks" in Liddell-Scott, which influenced the translation "to break through" in the Loeb edition of this passage of Asclepiodotus (Oldfather 1923: *ad loc.*).

[85] Ael. 18.3; cf. Arr. *Tact.* 16.5.

[86] Asclep. 7.3, 5.

[87] Ael. 18.2; cf. Arr. *Tact.* 16.4: "it is both the most suitable for every manoeuvre and the most secure against the least chance of being taken from the rear or on the flanks" (καὶ ἔστιν ἐς πᾶσάν τε μεταβολὴν ἁρμοδιώτατον καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἥκιστα κατὰ νώτου ἢ πλαγίους ἁλισκεσθαι ἀσφαλέστερον).

appear to have been practised by Roman cavalry units during the Principate, notably their deployment in a "wedge" or *cuneus*. The connection between the character and tactical roles of *drungus* and *cuneus* is all the more instructive given that the word *cuneus* was similarly used in a variety of senses that changed with period and evidential context. From at least the second century B.C. to the late-sixth-century A.D. Roman historians and military writers used the word to describe deployments of both infantry and cavalry, both Roman and non-Roman. These descriptions are frustratingly vague and individual authors possibly employed the term differently; whether *cuneus*, *cuneatim*, and *in cuneo* ever referred to a literally "wedge-shaped" formation is doubtful, and in most cases these expressions probably mean no more than a body of troops deployed in close order or in a non-linear formation.[88] When applied to Roman cavalry the usage of *cuneus* varied considerably in technical, literary, and documentary sources. Epigraphic sources indicate that from the 230s at the latest *cuneus* came to be employed as the official nomenclature for a certain type of cavalry unit. These *cunei equitum* were originally "irregular" units recruited from non-Roman peoples living beyond the frontiers of the empire, who were less likely to deploy formally in files or to fight in linear formations; hence presumably their designation as *cunei*, which was broadly indicative of their class and tactics rather than a literal description of a battle formation.[89] In the *Notitia Dignitatum*, however, forty-seven regular Roman cavalry units among the *vexillationes limitaneae* bear the title *cuneus*, though the creation of these *cunei equitum* appears to have been confined to a relatively short period in the late third and early fourth centuries.[90] It is wholly unclear how, if at all, these *cunei equitum* differed in organization

[88] For the Roman infantry *cuneus* in histories see, for example, Caes. *B Gall.* 6.40; Livy 2.50.9; 7.24.7; Tac. *Ann.* 14.37, *Hist.* 2.42, 3.29; Amm. Marc. 17.13.9, 24.2.14. *Cuneus* also had a specific and perhaps theoretical meaning for tactical writers and military antiquarians: Cato *De re mil.* fr. 11 in Jordan 1860: 82; Gell. *NA* 10.9.1; Veg. *Epit. mil.* 3.17, 19. The *cuneus*, transliterated as κουνίον, was still known as an infantry formation to Maurice: see *Strat.* 12.A.7.22–23. See generally Lammert 1940; Goldsworthy 1996: 205–206; Nicasie 1998: 110–112. The belief that the infantry *cuneus*, both Roman and Germanic, was never a genuinely "wedge"-shaped formation, but rather a compact and essentially square column of attack was popularised by Delbrück (1921[1980]: 41–51), who emphatically rejected the intrinsic utility of a wedge-shaped deployment in the warfare of any period; his conclusions have frequently been repeated, often uncritically. I plan to examine the various meanings of *cuneus* and related Roman deployments in a separate study.

[89] Only three units called *cunei* are attested before the *Notitia Dignitatum*, all recruited from the Frisii or Frisiones, and all stationed in northern Britain in the third century: *cuneus Frisorum Ver(coviciensium)*, post 222–235 (*RIB* 1594); *cuneus Frisionum Aballavensium* in 241/2 (*RIB* 882 883); *cuneus Frisiorum Vinonensium*, unspecified third century (*RIB* 1036).

[90] See also *CTh.* 7.13.7 (375): *qui in ripa per cuneos auxiliaque fuerint constituti.* In the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the overwhelming concentration of forty-four of the forty-seven *cunei equitum* along the *ripa Sarmatica* on the middle Danube, with just three other *limitanei* units elsewhere (two in Egypt and one in Britain), suggests developments connected to a specific period, region, and/or event, and probably relates to campaigns and frontier reorganizations of the Tetrarchic period and/or Constantine. See Hoffmam 1969–70: 1.247–255; Southern and Dixon 1996: 33–35; Nicasie 1998: 63–64; Scharf 2001.

or function from other cavalry units designated *alae* or *equites*; in at least one case a *cuneus* listed in the *Notitia* is to all appearances an earlier *ala* simply renamed.[91] By extension, in narrative classicising histories, and at a vernacular level also, *cuneus* came to mean any deployment of compact bodies of cavalry, which were only "wedge-shaped" insofar as they were not linear formations. In several passages Ammianus uses the term *cuneus* very broadly to designate the tactical deployment of usually non-Roman forces.[92] His contemporary St Jerome, a valuable witness to popular usage, understood *cuneus* in the widest sense of any "company" or "band" of horsemen.[93] This brief survey of the usage of the word *cuneus* serves in part to illustrate that variation in the meaning of *drungus* throughout the period in question is consistent with the known development of other technical terms in late Roman military vocabulary, and additionally suggests that the compact, non-linear tactical deployment that Maurice calls δρουγγιστί is not the innovation that his use of this hitherto unattested expression might imply.

Finally, it is worth noting that the capabilities of Roman cavalry in such "irregular" tactics appear to broaden through contact with "Steppe" peoples (or peoples with Steppe antecedents), such as Huns and possibly Ostrogoths and Danubian Sarmatians. Roman authors regularly define such tactics as "Scythian" or "barbarian," or especially characteristic of the tactics of these nations.[94] This is most clearly demonstrated by the example of "feigned flights," in which cavalry simulated retreat and then wheeled about upon their disorganized pursuers, sometimes in combination with concealed ambushers. This tactic was very rare before the late third century, but is thereafter regularly recorded as part of the Roman cavalry's tactical repertoire.[95] With regard to the deployment and

[91] The single *cuneus* based in Britain in *Notitia Dignitatum*, the *cuneus Sarmatarum* at Ribchester (*Oc.* 40.54), appears to be a direct descendant of the *ala Sarmatarum* based there in the first half of the third century (*RIB* 594, 595), and identical to the oddly-named *numerus equitum Sarmatarum Bremetennacensium* (*RIB* 583) in the same place a few decades later (A.D. 238–244 or later; perhaps also the same as the *numerus* there on *RIB* 587 dated A.D. 222–235). This unit must have derived originally from the 5,500 Sarmatians Marcus Aurelius sent to Britain in 175 (Cass. Dio 72.16.2). See also the tile stamped "*BSAR*" reported from Catterick (*RIB* 2479), variously interpreted as a misreading of *N(umerus)* or *A(la) Sarm(atarum)*, or even *Eq(uites) Sar(matae)*.

[92] Amm. Marc. 16.11.5: *cuneis tribus equitum expeditiorum et fortium*; 17.2.1: *Francorum validissimos cuneos in sexcentis velitibus*; 17.12.1: *Sarmatas et Quados . . . cuneis incursare dispersis*; 17.12.9: *iunctis densius cuneis*; 25.6.7; 31.9.3: *congregatos in cuneos*; 31.16.4: *cuneus Saracenorum*.

[93] St Jerome *Vulgate, Judges* 9.37; 1 *Sam.* 13.17. Jerome renders as *cuneus* the Hebrew word ראש, meaning a "band" or "company" in no sense "wedge-shaped." Cf. the *Septuagint*'s similarly neutral ἀρχή in both passages. For assistance with this point I am grateful to G. G. B. Tindale (Peterhouse, Cambridge) and A. A. Macintosh (St John's, Cambridge).

[94] Agath. *Hist.* 1.22.1: διαλογισάμενος ἅπαντα ὁ Ναρσῆς βαρβαρικήν τινα στρατηγίαν καὶ μᾶλλον τοῖς Οὔννοις μεμελετημένην ἐμηχανᾶτο; Claud. *Ruf.* 1.329–331; Maurice *Strat.* 2.1.46–49, 4.2, 11.2.52–54; cf. 3.12.7–10, 9.2.92–95.

[95] The first clear instance is Aurelian's defeat of Palmyrene *cataphracti* at Immae in 272 at Zos. 1.50.3–4. Downey (1950) suggests unconvincingly that this was rather a strategic withdrawal to lure the Palmyrene cavalry away from the Roman infantry. Note that at Emessa shortly afterwards the

tactics of "Scythian" cavalry, Roman authors conceived the Huns and Avars in terms of highly manoeuvrable "wedges" or *cunei*. Ammianus describes the Huns "entering battle in wedged-shaped formations . . . they purposely divide suddenly into scattered bands and attack" (*ineuntes proelia cuneatim . . . subito de industria dispersi incessunt et incomposita acie*).[96] Maurice reports that the Avars deploy "in various brigades as *drungi*, linking the brigades with one another" (ἀλλ' ἐν διαφόροις μοίραις δρουγγιστὶ συνάπτοντες ἀλλήλαις τὰς μοίρας), and notes that they favour "wedge-shaped formations, that is to say, in separate units" (ταῖς κατὰ κούνας τάξεσι, τουτέστι ταῖς διεσπαρμέναις).[97] Roman contacts with the Huns from the 380s and the Avars from the 550s left their mark on the equipment and techniques of Roman cavalry, and it is probable that Roman efforts to develop a tactical response to "Steppe" cavalry placed greater emphasis on the existing attributes of Roman cavalry, principally its mobility, and to some extent required additional capabilities, including greater tactical flexibility and improved mounted archery. In these circumstances the type of tactics that late Roman authors variously described using terms such as δρουγγιστί, *globatim*, *cuneatim*—designating compact, non-linear, "group" deployment suited to irregular operations, ambushes, feints, and sudden attacks—although not "new," were undoubtedly of greater concern to late Roman tactical writers than to their predecessors, a case of changing emphasis rather than tactical innovation.

CONCLUSIONS

Although first attested in late fourth-century texts, the Gaulish-derived loan-word *drungus* (**dhrungho*), with the original meaning of "band" or "throng," was most probably adopted earlier in the Principate and had a "prehistory" at the

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same tactic ended in near disaster, cf. Zos. 1.53.1. For historical examples: Zonar. 13.5.9–13 (A.D. 340); ps.-Joshua Stylites 75; (probably) Procop. *Pers.* 1.13.36: μετὰ δὲ Ῥωμαῖοι μὲν οἱ φυγόντες ἐκ τοῦ αἰφνιδίου πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὥρμησαν; *Goth.* 2.5.11: οἱ μὲν ὅτι φεύγουσι δόξαν παρέχοντες, οἱ δὲ διώκειν τοὺς πολεμίους οἰόμενοι; J. Mal. 391.29–34; Agath. *Hist.* 1.22: καὶ ἐς παλίωξιν τὰ τῆς φυγῆς μετεχώρει; Theoph. Sim. *Hist.* 2.17.11: ἐπιπλάστῳ φυγῇ; George Pisidia *Exp. Pers.* 3.186–219 (= Theoph. *Chron.* 305.24–306.2). For Roman *tactica* see Veg. *Epit. mil.* 1.27; Syrianus *De strat.* 40; Maurice *Strat.* 2.1.44–51, 4.2–3, 11.3.33, 11.4.124–127. See also ἡ λεγομένη φυγομαχία at *Strat.* 4.3.32; τὸ λεγόμενον φυγομαχεῖν at 7.B.11.16. This phrase appears in other earlier texts, but with the different sense of "avoiding battle." For a possible earlier instance of Roman feigned flight, see Joseph. *BJ* 4.1.8 (60), which describes the withdrawal and return of 600 cavalry under Placidus near Mount Tabor (φυγὴν ὑποκρίνεται καὶ διώκοντας ἑλκύσας ἐπὶ πολὺ τοῦ πεδίου τοὺς ἱππεῖς ἐπιστρέφει), though this seems to be a strategic withdrawal to lure the Jews from the mountain; see Placidius and similar tactics at *idem* 4.7.4 (421–436).

[96] Amm. Marc. 31.2.8. Cf. Curt. 7.7.35 on Scythian Dahae cavalry deployed *in cuneos*. See Zástěrová 1971: 25 for *cunei* as one of the standard *topoi* comprising classical descriptions of "Scythian" military methods.

[97] *Strat.* 11.2.40–43 (Dennis 1981: 362, incorrectly ἀλλήλοις), 54–55. Maurice uses this Greek transliteration of *cuneus* in only one other passage, to describe the "so-called wedges of infantry"; cf. *Strat.* 12.A.7.24: τὰ λεγόμενα τῶν πεζῶν κουνία. For Avars deployed in multiple bands see Theoph. Sim. *Hist.* 8.2.11: δέκα καὶ πέντε συστήμασιν ἐξοπλισάντων τὴν ἔκταξιν; 3.9: δυοκαίδεκα συστήμασιν ἐξοπλίζει τὸν πόλεμον.

vernacular level of "army slang." *Drungus* was a nominal borrowing, which was not accompanied by specific tactical or organisational changes in the Roman army; that is to say, the adoption of a Gaulish word does not imply the simultaneous adoption of a specific Gallic technique. Its first appearance in the late fourth century largely reflects a dearth of earlier extant texts either with sufficient technical content or without prejudice against "barbarian" or vulgar vocabulary inconsistent with stylistic purity. From its first attestation *drungus*/δροῦγγος was a generic term for a "group" or "band," which reflected the core meaning of this loanword, perhaps originally applied to a relatively small unit when arrayed in an "irregular" formation and deployed in certain tactical operations, such as outflanking attacks. Later *drungus*/δροῦγγος also came to be a popular, non-technical designation for any group of soldiers, equally applicable to a division of 5–6,000 horsemen as to a band of three or four infantrymen. It is only later, probably in the early seventh century, that δροῦγγος became the official title for a permanent "brigade." The tactical deployment Maurice calls δρουγγιστί or "in *drungi*" recalls the earlier sense of *drungus*, and meant the non-linear deployment of cavalry in compact, mutually supporting groups or "masses," well suited to conducting stratagems and irregular tactics. While this word is unattested before Maurice's *Strategicon*, the deployment itself was broadly similar in character and function to earlier so-called "wedges" of cavalry, of which there was a long if rather theoretical literary tradition in Hellenistic tactical treatises, and to some of the meanings of the subsequent Roman cavalry *cuneus*. The greater frequency with which such deployments are reported in late Roman historical narratives, and their explicit similarity to the cavalry tactics of "Steppe" peoples, reflects not so much a radical "reform"—and still less the "barbarization" of Roman cavalry tactics—as a changed emphasis towards irregular warfare, in which various *ruses de guerre* created favourable tactical circumstances and to some extent replaced pitched battle altogether in the generally low-intensity defensive warfare associated with the ongoing maintenance of frontier security that characterises the later Roman period.

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