The *Etymologicum Magnum* and the “Fragment of Urbicius”

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**BYZANTINE LEXICA AND ETIMOLOGICA** have long been recognised as treasuries rich in citations from lost works of antiquity.¹ These great monuments of mediaeval Greek scholarship and encyclopaedism have been subjected to almost two centuries of modern criticism and commentary, of which the highpoint was the enterprise of late nineteenth/early twentieth-century German classical philologists. Many obscurities

¹ I am grateful to Prof. Klaus Alpers (University of Hamburg) for his kind assistance with this subject. The following abbreviations have been used:


Reitzenstein (1897) = R. Reitzenstein, *Geschichte der griechischen Etyomologika* (Leipzig 1897)

Reitzenstein (1907) = “Etymologika,” *RE* 6 (1907) 807–817


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persist in this field, however, in part because some of the most important works lack modern and/or complete critical editions or have never been published.\(^2\) The present study directs a relatively narrow focus upon a single entry in the *Etymologicum Magnum*, the conventional title for an extensive lexical compendium produced by an unknown compilator in the mid-twelfth century.\(^3\) The article *στρατός* in the *Etymologicum Magnum* contains what purports to be an extract of an unnamed work by Urbicius, a writer of military treatises in the late fifth/early sixth century, who in turn drew on a classicizing tradition of tactical writing dating back to the late Hellenistic period. This embedded extraneous item has been variously identified as a heavily modified excerpt from Urbicius’ extant *Tacticon* or a fragment of a unidentified lost work by Urbicius, though there is no scholarly consensus on this point and none of the arguments advanced is wholly satisfying. This paper presents a detailed deconstruction of the text of this lexical article, which


will demonstrate that it is a complex amalgam fashioned from several sources that originate in different genres and periods, and locating it within the textual traditions of both Graeco-Roman military literature and Byzantine lexicography. It is hoped in addition that these limited objectives will make a modest but significant contribution to understanding the methodology, source-materials, and originality of the compiler of the *Etymologicum Magnum* and, more broadly, the reception and preservation of classical literature in Byzantine encyclopaedic compilations.

The article στρατός in the *Etymologicum Magnum* incorporates a short self-contained section under the heading Ὄρβικίου, τῶν περὶ τοῦ στράτευμα τάξεων, “(from) Orbikios, on the formations of the army.” This item, hereafter “the fragment,” comprises a brief explanatory outline of the technical and for the most part classicising terminology for the various sub-divisions of an army and the appropriate commanding officers, followed by a list of terms relating to the deployment of troops on the battlefield. The Ὄρβικίος in question is doubtless Urbicius, a stratégiste en chambre, about whom almost nothing is known with certainty other than his authorship of military treatises during the reign of Anastasius I (491–518). Two (formerly conjoined) works by Urbicius are extant. First, the *Tacticon* is a brief skeletal epitome of the first part (chs. 1–32) of Arrian’s *Ars Tactica*, written in A.D. 136 in celebration of Hadrian’s vicennalia. This section of Arrian’s work is a conventional and avowedly antiquarian treatment of the arcane terminology, internal articulation, and tactical evolutions of an idealised infantry phalanx, drawing on an originally late Hellenistic sub-genre of Graeco-Roman military literature. Second, the *Ἐπιτήδευμα* or “Invention” was...
originally appended to the *Tacticon* but separated and transmitted as an independent item at some point before the late tenth century.\(^7\) In this pamphlet Urbicius recommends, with rhetorical embellishment, his own design for a type of portable *chevaux-de-frise* called *kanones* (κανόνες), which he contends would be of great utility in warfare against barbarian horse-archers. This tract falls within the category of amateur compositions addressed to imperial incumbents and predicting victory through technological innovation, which sought as much to publicize the author’s erudition and curry favour at court as to offer practical counsel. It is of no immediate relevance to the present study.\(^8\) To these two opuscula modern


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The scholarship has conventionally added a third work, the so-called “Cynegeticus of Urbicius,” a short tract concerning large-scale hunting as a method of training cavalry, but both the title and ascription are modern fabrications without manuscript authority that resulted from confused and careless scholarship in the 1930s. The erroneous ascription of Maurice’s Strategicon (ca. 590–600) to Urbicius in one tenth-century manuscript (M) is demonstrably spurious and the result of the copyist’s intervention.

In its earliest extant form the tract on hunting is appended to the “authentic recension” (MSS MA) of Maurice’s Strategicon (12.D), though eccentricities of style and vocabulary betray its earlier independence. Detailed argument will follow elsewhere; it suffices here to observe that there is no manuscript authority for ascribing this item to Urbicius, nor any reason to connect him with it. The “Cynegeticus d’Urbicius” first surfaced from a bewildering jumble of errors in A. Dain, La “Tactique” de Nicéphore Ouranos (Paris 1937) 58, and via additional misconceptions became an idée fixe in Dain/de Foucault (1967) 341–342, 352–353, 372, thence passing into the work of many other scholars, most recently Shuvalov I 77–78, 81–83, II 35 with n.4, 40 fig. 2, 42, 46, 48 (with additional misunderstanding). On this tract in general see P. Rance, “Simulacra pugnae: the Literary and Historical Tradition of Mock Battles in the Roman and Early Byzantine Army,” GRBS 41 (2000) 223–275, at 254–258; V. V. Kuchma, “Трактат «Охоте»,” ADSF 33 (Ekaterinburg 2002) 48–58.

10 Förster 455–459; F. Aussaresses, “L’auteur du Strategicon,” REA 8 (1906) 23–40; Dain/de Foucault (1968) 136; G. T. Dennis [ed.], Das Strategikon des Maurikios, Germ. transl. E. Gamillscheg (CFHB 17 [Vienna 1981]), 15–18 with stemma codicum at 41. Even Shuvalov I 79–81, 84, who wishes to ascribe the Strategicon to Urbicius, has to concede that on codicological grounds the ascription to Urbicius (ΟΥΡΒΙΚΙΟΥ) uniquely found in M must have been introduced by the tenth-century copyist and that his exemplar (ε) bore an ascription to Maurice (ΜΑΥΡΙΚΙΟΥ), cf. n.45 below. Shuvalov has attempted to resurrect the long-discredited thesis that Urbicius wrote the Strategicon. He presents a highly conjectural case for a two-stage textual evolution of the Strategicon, the earliest version of which was written in the late fifth/early sixth century. This putative “Strategicon of Urbicius” was, he claims, revised in the late sixth century during the reign of Maurice (582–602), at which point the many internal references that now date the work to that period were added, and presumably all explicit traces
The few scholars who have examined the article στρατός have drawn widely differing conclusions concerning the origin and character of the alleged extract of Urbicius. The text has been available to scholarship since the editio princeps by Zacharias Kallierges in 1499, but until the later nineteenth century it was better known via an appendix to Henri Estienne’s Thesaurus Graecae Linguae (1572), where it was originally printed as a discrete fragment without explanation or reference to the Etymologicum Magnum, though an editorial note was added in the revised edition of 1865. Scholarly interest began with Johann Scheffer, the editor princeps of Maurice’s Strategicon (1664), who conjectured that this “fragmentum Urbicii” had been extracted from a lost work, which, he thought, Maurice had used when compiling his treatise, though Scheffer offered no evidence to substantiate this speculation and his antiquarian guesswork need not detain the modern reader. In the earliest critical

of Urbicius’ authorship erased. The current text of the Strategicon, he contends, is thus an “Urbician” treatise overlaid by a “Maurician” textual stratum, and this “Maurician recension” was transmitted in the manuscript tradition under Maurice’s name. See Shuvalov I and II, with a slightly different version of the same arguments in idem, “Влияние авар на позднеримское военное дело,” in V. M. Masson et al. (eds.), Изучение культурного наследия Востока (St. Peters burg 1999) 48–51. Shuvalov’s hypothesis, for the most part a modified rehearsal of arguments originally put forward by R. Vári in the 1890s–1900s (in support of his own case for authorship by a putative eighth-century “Urbicius”), will be rebutted in detail in P. Rance, The Roman Art of War in Late Antiquity: The Strategicon of the Emperor Maurice (Birmingham Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Monographs, forthcoming).


12 Arriani Tactica et Mauricii Artis militaris libri duodecim (Uppsala 1664) 383–384. Scheffer appears to have been ignorant of the context or character of this “fragmentum,” which he knew only as an unreferenced fragment in the appendix to the Thesaurus Graecae Linguae (1572). Scheffer’s seventeenth-century guesswork is based on too many misconceptions and faulty and/or incomplete data to warrant detailed rebuttal. The fragment was also noted without comment by F. Haase, “Über die griechischen und lateinischen Kriegsschriftsteller,” Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik 5 [14.1] (1835) 88–118, at 108, as “de Ordinibus exercitus.”
assessment of the evidence Richard Förster firmly denied a connection between the “Fragment des Urbicius” and the extant Tacticon, observing that their contents exhibit few points of correspondence, though he offered no alternative explanation for the origin of the fragment.\(^\text{13}\) Karl Krumbacher acknowledged the existence of this “lexikalische Artikel” but stopped short of identifying it with Urbicius’ known works, implying that this item is or derives from an additional composition, though the content and context of the fragment make it an unlikely independent work, at least in its current form.\(^\text{14}\) In contrast, and with greater confidence, the distinguished French codicologist Alphonse Dain identified the fragment as a modified abridgment of Urbicius’ Tacticon, “un développement qui est une adaptation fortement résumée et stylisée du morceau d’Urbicius, et qui porte encore mentionné le souvenir de son origine.”\(^\text{15}\) Dain’s status as the most prolific and influential scholar of the Greek tactical tradition writing in the second half of the twentieth century has ensured the endorsement of this view by subsequent scholarship.\(^\text{16}\) Most recently Geoffrey Greatrex was inclined to accept the essence of this textual relationship, though he rightly observed partial inconsistency in the content of the fragment and the Tacticon.\(^\text{17}\) There is there-


\(^\text{14}\) K. Krumbacher, Geschichte der Byzantinischen Literatur\(^\text{2}\) (Munich 1897) 635, 637, “Ausserdem schrieb Orbikios einen Auszug der Taktik des Arrian (τακτικόν) und einen im Etymologicum Magnum erhaltenen Artikel über die Unterabteilungen des Heeres und deren Führer (Ορβικίου τῶν περὶ τὸ στράτευμα τάξεων).”

\(^\text{15}\) Dain (1946) 38–39, reiterated in Dain/de Foucault (1967) 347; (1968) 130, “C’est une adaptation fortement stylisée et un bref résumé du Tacticon d’Urbicius, présenté sous le nom même d’Urbicius.”

\(^\text{16}\) E.g. PLRE II 1190, “The passages (sic) of Urbicius cited in the EM s.v. στρατός from a later resumé of the Tacticon”; and most recently Shuvalov I 83.

\(^\text{17}\) Greatrex et al. 42–43 with n.36: “the last section of the entry, however … does not appear to be drawn from either Urbicius or Arrian.”
fore scope for further investigation to determine the origin and character of the fragment and its relationship to Urbicius and his works, and to conjecture the possible circumstances or interest that led to its inclusion in the *Etymologicum Magnum*.

The article στρατός reads as follows:

στρατός: τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πολεμοῦντων. παρά τὸ στρέφω, στρέψω, ἑστραμμα, ἑστραμμα, στρατός καὶ, κατὰ ἀποφο-λὴν τοῦ π., στρατός, ὁ εὑρήσκομενος, ἢ ὁ συνεστραμμένος καὶ συνδεδεμένος ὁχλος. ἄλλα μὴν οἱ Αἰολεῖς στρόφῳ λέγουσι τὸ φῆμα καὶ στρόφῳ λέγουσι τὸ συνεστραμμένον πλῆθος. ἢ παρά τὸ στερφοῦ ὡσαθεὶ στρατός ἢ παρά τὸ στερφοῦ ὡσαθεὶ, ὡσαθεὶ ἐφάλλεσθαι.

Ορθιαίοι, τῶν περὶ τὸ στράτευμα τάξεων, ἱστεὸν δὲ, ὡτὶ τῶν περὶ τὸ στράτευμα τάξεων καὶ ἱστεόμονα, ὃ μὲν πέντε ἀνδρῶν ἀρίθμος καλεῖται πεμπτάς ὃ δὲ ἀρχήν, πεμπτάδαρχος ὃ δὲ τῶν δέκα, δεκαδράρχος ὃ δὲ τῶν πεντά, δεκαπεντάρχος ὃ τῶν πεντά, δεκαπεντάρχος καὶ λογικός τὸν πεντήκοντα, πεντηκοντάρχος, καὶ πεντηκοντάρχος ὃ τῶν ἐκατόν τάξεις καὶ ταξίαρχος ὃ τῶν πεντήκοντα καὶ διακοσίων, σύνταξις καὶ συνταξιομάρτυρς ὃ τῶν πενταχωσίων, πενταχωσίαπτης καὶ πενταχωσίαρχος ὁ τῶν χιλίων χιλιοστής καὶ χιλιόμορφος ὁ τῶν δισμελίων μεραρχής καὶ τέκος, μεράρχος καὶ τελάρχης ὁ τῶν τετρακεισακίων, φάλαγξ καὶ φαλαγγάρχης ὃ τῶν μυριάων μυριοστής καὶ μυριάρχος δὲ δύο διφαλαγγαρχία, τετραφαλαγγαρχία, ἀνδρῶν μυρίων ἐκατασκόμοι καὶ ὁ ἀρχήν τετραφαλαγγαρχίας τὸ μένοι πεζίων ὑπὰν στράτευμα ὁμονύμως τοῖς μερικοῖς τάγμασι λέγεται φάλαγξ καὶ ὁ ἱστεάτους, στρατηγὸς τοῦ δὲ ἔπαθος ὅπως πεζοί τεκναῖς, στατατίας τῆς στρατιάς τὸ μέτωπον λιγόμενον καὶ πρωτόστομον μεγαλύτερον, πρωτοστάτης, πρω- τοστάτης οἱ δὲ παρ᾽ ἐκάτερα τατηκόμοι κέρατα, δεξιόν τε καὶ εὐώνυμον, οἱ αὐτοὶ καὶ παραστάται ὃ ἄρχος ὁμονύμως οἱ δὲ ὧποιον αὐτὸν ὡς ἔπι τῷ βέβας τατηκόμοι ἑπιστάται τὸ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦτος πρὸς τὸ βάθος ἐσχάτον ζυγοῦν, οὐφα καὶ οὐφαγία, καὶ οὐφαγία ὃ αὐτὸς δὲ ὀποιοδοξία ὃ συνήθεια πεντηκοντάρχῃ λακαί αὐτὸν καλέι ὃ δὲ γε τοῦ παντὸς στρατοῦ ἵστεον, ὡσαθεὶ ἐφάλλεσθαι.

The article comprises two distinct elements: first, the lemma στρατός followed by an etymological gloss that adduces a sequence of typically fanciful derivations; second, a purported excerpt or abstract of an unidentified work or works by Urbicius, distinguished by a separate but rather uninformative rubric Ὀρθιαίοι, τῶν περὶ τὸ στράτευμα τάξεων. This second
section has a somewhat anomalous position within the *Etymologicum Magnum* as a whole in that, although an underlying etymological interest is implicit in many of the names of military units and officers listed (e.g. a notional five-man unit is intrinsic to the derivation of πεμπάς and πεμπάδαρχος), this section is nevertheless free of explicit etymologising, even where derivations are ripe for construal or misconstrual. In substance and genre, therefore, this excerpt takes the form of a specialist word-list, onomasticon, or short self-contained military lexicon, rather than, strictly speaking, an *etymologicum*. The differing character of the two elements of this lexical article, the gloss and the fragment, and the expressly extraneous origin of the latter, call for separate investigation with regard to their source material.

1. *The gloss s.v. στρατός*

   The compiler of the *Etymologicum Magnum* most frequently cites among his sources two other *etymologica*, which he styles τὸ μέγα Ἐτυμολογικόν and τὸ ἄλλο Ἐτυμολογικόν. The first of these is the *Etymologicum Genuinum*, which was compiled at Constantinople around the mid-ninth century and drew on the writings of numerous earlier lexicographers and scholiasts. This work was discovered during the nineteenth century in two tenth-century manuscripts, *Vat.gr. 1818 (A)* and *Laurent.S.Marci 304 (B)*, which do not preserve the earliest recension but two differing abridgements; the difficulties inherent in reconstructing the original text from these manuscripts, and from the comparative testimony of derivative lexica, are largely responsible for the *Etymologicum Genuinum* remaining for the most part unpublished.18 The second or “other *etymologicum*” is the so-called

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Etymologicum Gudianum, the archetype for which has been identified in the Vat.Barberin.gr. 70. While the southern Italian provenance of this Urhandschrift is generally acknowledged, its date remains disputed, with arguments for the late tenth century accepted here. The relationship between the Etymologicum Genuinum and the Etymologicum Gudianum is complex; the compiler of the Gudianum certainly had the Genuinum at his disposal as an exemplar, but appears also to have utilised some of the
same sources directly. Aside from these two earlier *etymologica*, the sources of the *Etymologicum Magnum* include an abridgement of Stephanus of Byzantium, Diogenianus’ epitome, Eulogius’ *Ἀπορίαι καὶ λύσεις*, the *Lexicon Αἰμωθέν*, George Choeroboscus’ *Epimerismi ad Psalmos*, scholia on Pindar, and other grammatical, rhetorical, and lexicographical works. The compiler of the *Etymologicum Magnum* freely modified the material he drew from his two principal sources—abbreviating and expanding explanations, and/or transposing text; adding glosses and imposing a stricter alphabetical sequence; altering or suppressing citations, rewording lemmata and interpolating new references. In short he was not an unoriginal copyist but sought to craft a novel and individual work according to his own design.

Given our knowledge of the sources of the *Etymologicum Magnum* and of the working practices of its compiler, reconstruction of the textual history of the gloss στρατός presents relatively few problems. The compiler combined the corresponding articles in the *Etymologicum Genuinum* and *Etymologicum Gudianum*, and by amalgamating and transposing clauses according to a fastidious cut-and-paste methodology, and variously reducing and expanding the text of his two exemplars, he critically refashioned these sources into a new text. The process is tabulated below, with borrowings from the *Genuinum* underlined and those from the *Gudianum* in bold type.

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22 Reitzenstein (1897) 241–248 demonstrates the compiler’s methodology using specimen glosses in σμ-.
Furthermore, the sources for the glosses in the two older etymologica can in turn be established. The source for the Etymologicum Gudianum is an anonymous alphabetised collection of Homeric epimerisms compiled between the mid-eighth and mid-ninth centuries:


The gloss in the *Etymologicum Genuinum* was drawn from two sources. (a) The majority of the gloss derives from a Homeric epimerism, possibly known in the form of a scholion rather than an alphabetised lexicon. A substantially similar text is preserved in the aforementioned collection of *Epimerismi Homerici*, which must derive from the same tradition but is not the direct source for the gloss in the *Etymologicum Genuinum*:

στρατός· ὁ εὐπερίτρεπτος, ὡς γέγραπται γραπτός, καὶ στρατός, ὃς ἐνδείᾳ τοῦ π, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γίνεται στρατός, ὡς ἐν τῷ θάλπῳ θάλπαμος καὶ θάλαμος, γί

(b) The first line, στρατός· τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πολεμοῦντων, ὤ τὸ τόπος στρατόπεδον· λέγεται γὰρ τοῦ στρατοῦ τὸ πέδον, is derived from the so-called ἤμημοροικόν, a designation that the compiler of the *Etymologicum Genuinum* elsewhere applies to an earlier lexical compilation, now identified as a late recension of the anonymous Συναγωγὴ λέξεων χρησίμων, an originally later eighth-/early ninth-century alphabetised adaptation of the (fifth-century?) glossarium of rare words falsely ascribed to Cyril of Alexandria. Different versions of the Συναγωγὴ were independently the sources for the identical glosses s.v. στρατός in both the *Lexicon* of Photius (ca. 840) and the *Suda* (ca. 1000).28
This gloss already had a long pedigree: it was earlier partially registered in the fifth-century *Lexicon* of Hesychius, and in extant *lexica* it may be traced back to the surviving abridgement of the *Lexicon Homericum* of Apollonius Sophista (originally ca. A.D. 100), and given the derivative character of the latter work in all likelihood derives from an earlier Homeric glossary or scholion, though which of Apollonius’ many sources supplied this material is not known.29

2. The “Fragment of Urbicius”

Reitzenstein has already observed that the fragment of Urbicius does not occur in either the *Etymologicum Genuinum* or *Etymologicum Gudianum*, nor in any of the other known sources of the *Etymologicum Magnum*.30 The compilator seems therefore to have drawn the fragment from an alternative and unknown source, and it remains to be established whether he knew an original text by Urbicius directly or via another lexical compendium, and to what degree he modified its contents. A translation of the fragment follows:

(From) Urbicius, on the formations of the army. One should know, with regard to the formations and commands of the army, that a force of five men is called a *pempas*, of which the commander is a *pempadarchos*; a force of ten men is a *dekas* under

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30 Reitzenstein (1897) 250: “ebenso aus Orbikios entlehnte längere Stück ... Die Zahl der benutzten Nebenquellen ist bei diesem vielleicht erst durch die allmähliche Arbeit verschiedener Grammatiker erstandenen Werk keinesfalls gering.”
a dekarchos; twenty-five men a lochos under a lochagos; fifty men a pentekostus under a pentekontarchos; a hundred men a taxis under a taxisarchos, two hundred and fifty men a suntagma under a suntagmatarchos; five hundred men a pentakosiotus under a pentakosiarchos; a thousand men a chilostus under a chilarchos; two thousand men a merarchia or telos under a merarchês or telarchês; four thousand men a phalanx under a phalangarchês; ten thousand men a muriostus under a muriarchos. Two diphalangarchiai are a tetraphalangarchia, of one thousand six hundred men, of which the commander is a tetraphalangarchês. An army which is wholly infantry is called a phalanx, having the same name as its constituent units, of which the leader is a stratêgos, while a hipparchos leads the cavalry; but an army that is both infantry and cavalry is a stràitia. The so-called “front” (metópon) of the army is what they also call the first rank, the protostatai, of which the leader is a protostatês. The men deployed on either wing, the right and the left, these are both parastatai, and the commander is similarly named. The men deployed in depth behind them are epistatai, while their last rank is called the “tail” (oura) or ouragia, under an ouragos; this man is also an opisthophulax, who is customarily called the pentekontophulax. The man who heads the whole army, however, is the emperor.

The fragment divides broadly into two parts: an initial outline of an organisational structure and hierarchy for an army, followed by an explanation of terminology concerned with tactical deployment and the stationing of personnel. It is first necessary to determine whether and to what extent either part corresponds to the contents of Urbicius’ Tacticon.

Urbicius begins his Tacticon with a similar summary of the subdivisions of an army, but it is markedly different in content and origin. Here Urbicius reiterates a conventional and largely artificial numerical schema for the organisation of an idealised phalanx, as delineated by his model Arrian (Tact. 10) and the other authors who drew on the same late Hellenistic tradition of tactical writing (principally Asclepiodotus and Aelian). The base unit for this system was a squad or file (lochos) of 16 men, which is successively doubled via a series of increasingly larger units to arrive ultimately at a hypothetical army of 16,384 heavy infantry, supported by half as many light infantry (8,192) and half that again in cavalry (4,096). Within such abstract discussions of the tactical manoeuvres of an infantry phalanx the value of the magic number 16,384 was its sequential divisibility
by two down to, in theory, a two-man file \((16,384 = 2^{14})\). This numerical sequence, which was probably formulated, or at least canonised, in a lost tactica by the Stoic philosopher Poseidonius of Apamea (ca. 135–51 B.C.), is in some measure reflective of Hellenistic philosophical and arithmetical idealism, but it served military theorists as a convenient illustrative model when explaining military formations and tactical evolutions. To the extent that this sub-genre portrays a “real” army, it is most probably the Seleucid army of the late second century B.C.\(^{31}\)

Urbicius presents this contrived organisational hierarchy as follows (Tact. praef.):

τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ παντὸς πεζικοῦ στρατεύματος ὁφείλει ἔχειν ἄν-
дрας μιρίους ἐξάκισχιλίους τριακοσίους ὁχήμοντα τέσσαρες.
αἱ δὲ ὅχημαί τοῖς ἰχνεμόνοι τοῦ τοιούτου στρατεύματός εἰσιν
αὕται: λοχαγός ὁ δεκαὲξ ἄνδρῶν ἤγουμενος. διλοχιτής ὁ δύο
λόχων ἤγουμενος, ὁ ἐστιν ἄνδρων ḿβ. τετράρχης ὁ τεσσάρων
λόχων ἤγουμενος, ὁ ἐστιν ἄνδρων ἧδ. ταξιάρχης ὁ λόχων ὀκτὼ
ἄρχων, τουτέστιν ἄνδρων ἑκ. ἑκατοντάρχης ὁ ἑκατὸν
μόνον ἄνδρων ἤγουμενος. συνταγματάρχης ὁ λόχων ἴπτ. ἤγουμενος,
ὁ ἐστιν ἄνδρων σν. ὁ λόχων ἴσι. οὔτος δὲ καὶ ἕξισι. καλεῖται. δεὶ δὲ τοὺς
οὕτως ἤχειν ἐπίλεκτους πέντε, οὐραγόν, στρατοκή-
ρυκα, σαλπιγκτὴν καὶ ὑπηρέτην. πεντακοσιάρχης ὁ λόχων ἱπτ.
ḩγουμενος, οὗτος δὲ ἄνδρων ψβ. χιλιάρχης ὁ λόχων ἱδ. ἄρχων,
tουτέστιν ἄνδρων ἀβδ. μεράρχης ὁ λόχων ρκη. ἤγουμενος,
tουτέστιν ἄνδρων ἰμπ. ὁ ἐστιν καὶ τελάρχης ὁνομάζεται. φαλαγγάρχης ὁ
λόχων διακοσίων πεντηκονταὲξ ἄρχων, ἤγουμεν ἄνδρων ἵμπ. ὁ ἐστιν
cαὶ καὶ στρατηγὸς καλεῖται. διφαλαγγάρχης ὁ λόχων ἱπτ. ἤγουμενος,
tουτέστιν ἄνδρων ἰμπ. τοῦτο αὐτὸ καλεῖται κέρας. τετραφαλαγγάρχης ὁ
λόχων ἱδ. ἄρχων, ὁ ἐστιν ἄνδρων μυρίων ἑξακισχιλίων τπδ. τοῦτον γὰρ τὸν
ἄρπηθον κάλλιστον καὶ ἀρμόζοντα τῇ ἀριθμητῇ τῶν πεζῶν τάξει
ἐκρίναμεν.

The mass of the whole infantry army ought to comprise 16,384
men. The terms for the commanders of such an army are as
follows: a lochagos is the commander of 16 men. A
dilochitês is the
commander of two lochoi, which is 32 men. A
tetrarchês is the
commander of four lochoi, which is 64 men. A
taxiarchês is the
officer of eight lochoi, which is 128 men. A
hekatontarchês is the
commander of only a hundred men. A
suntagmatarchês is the
commander of 16 lochoi, which is 256 men; this man is also called a
xenagos. The 256 men should include five select men: a standard-

in Sekunda, Hellenistic Infantry Reform in the 160's BC (Łódz 2001) 125–134, at
128–129, argues persuasively that Poseidonius originated the tradition. For
what it is worth, the speculative attempt of L. Poznanski to reconstruct what
Polybius' lost tactice might have looked like envisages a work quite different
in content from the Poseidonian tradition: “A propos du ‘Traité de Tac-
tique’ de Polybe,” Athenaeum 58 (1980) 340–352, and “Essai de reconstitu-
tion du Traité de Polybe d’après le livre III des Histoires,” AntCl 49 (1980)
161–172.
bearer, a rearguard (ouragos), a herald, a bugler, and an adjutant. A pentakosiarchês is the commander of 32 lochoi, which is 512 men. A chiliarchês is the commander of 64 lochoi, which is 1,024 men. A merarchês is the commander of 128 lochoi, which is 2,048 men; this man is also termed a telarchês. A phalangarchês is the officer of 256 lochoi, which is 4,096 men; this man is also called a stratêgos. A diphilangarchês is the commander of 512 lochoi, which is 8,192 men. This unit is called a wing. A tetraphalangarchês is the officer of 1,024 lochoi, which is 16,384 men. For we have judged this number to be the best and most convenient for a combat formation of infantry.

It is difficult to concur with Dain’s conclusion that this passage was the source for the article in the Etymologicum Magnum. The binary sequence of the late Hellenistic tradition differs from the decimal system outlined in the fragment. There are points of conceptual and terminological correspondence: both texts include a suntagma tarchês (commanding 250 or 256 men), a pentakosiarchês (500 or 512), a chiliarchês (1,000 or 1,024), a merarchês or telarchês (2,000 or 2,048), a phalangarchês (4,000 or 4,096), and a tetraphalangarchês (16,000 or 16,384). But the author of the fragment has clearly attempted to reconcile two conflicting organisational systems, in that for the most part he presents a decimal sequence (5, 10, 25, 50, 100, 250, 500, 1,000, 10,000) which at first stands in sharp contrast to the unit-strengths Urbicius describes in the Tacticon (16, 32, 64, 128). For some of the larger formations the two systems, in rounded figures, coincide (250/256, 500/512, 1,000/1,024), but the author of the fragment struggles to accommodate other elements of the Hellenistic tradition, which more crudely intrude into his preferred decimal model; thus he incongruously includes formations of 2,000 (rounded 2,048) and 4,000 (4,096) men, and having completed his decimal sequence at 10,000 he abruptly adds that a tetraphalangarchia comprising 16,000 men is composed of two diphilangarchiae, though he does not otherwise mention the latter formation or name its officer. There are also contradictions in the use of terminology: for Urbicius a lochos under a lochagos is a 16-man unit, but in the fragment contains 25 men; while according to Urbicius the term stratêgos is synonymous with phalangarchês, the commander of the 4,096-strong sub-unit called a phalanx, but in the fragment the stratêgos is the
commander of the entire army, which may, apparently, also be called a *phalanx*. Other officer-titles listed by Urbicius are absent from the fragment (διλοχίτης, τετράρχης, ἕκατοντάρχης, ξεναγός).

Furthermore, a large number of organisational and hierarchical terms which appear in the fragment are nowhere used by Urbicius. In the *Tacticon* Urbicius supplies only the titles of officers but not the names of the units they command, as found in the fragment. In some cases it is perfectly conceivable that the author of the fragment could have construed the names of units from their officers’ titles (λόχος < λοχαγός, τάξις < ταξιάρχης, σύνταγμα < συνταγματάρχης, μεραρχία < μεράρχης, τέλος < τελάρχης, δυφαλαγγαρχία < δυφαλαγγάρχης, τετραφαλαγγαρχία < τετραφαλαγγάρχης), but in other instances the terminology of the fragment is wholly without parallel in Urbicius’ work (πεμπάς, πεμπάδαρχος, δεκάς, δεκάδαρχος, πεντηκοστύς, πεντηκοσταρχος, χιλιοστύς, χιλιοσταρχος, μυριοστύς, μυριοσταρχος). Above all, none of the information in the second part of the fragment concerning tactical deployment occurs in the eleven chapters of Urbicius’ *Tacticon*, and the author could not therefore have drawn on this text for his definitions of the terms—μέτωπον, πρωτοστάται, παραστάται, ἐπιστάται, οὐρά, οὐραγία, οὐραγός, ὀπισθοφύλαξ, πεντηκοστοφύλαξ, or ἰππαρχος. 32

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32 Urbicius later mentions a ἰππαρχος (*Tact. 5*), but this officer is the commander of a specific 512-strong cavalry unit according to the conventions of the late Hellenistic organisational schema, and thus quite distinct from the ἰππαρχος in the fragment, who commands all the cavalry in the army. Urbicius also mentions an οὐραγός as one of the five select men (ἐπίλεκτοι) of a 256-man *suntagma*, but the completely different context and the additional terminological synonyms in the fragment (οὐρά καὶ οὐραγία, καὶ οὐραγός ὁ ἀυτός δὲ ὀπισθοφύλαξ ... πεντηκοστοφύλαξ) indicates that Urbicius’ *Tacticon* was not the source. In ancient tactical writers the term οὐραγός was used with two distinct meanings. First, the last man in every file, i.e. the final rank of a formation, were collectively the οὐραγοί or “file-closers,” whose important role in maintaining cohesion from the rear during combat is frequently acknowledged (Xen. *Mem.* 3.1.8, *Eq.Mag.* 2.3, *Cyr.* 3.3.41–42; Asclep. 2.2, 3.6; Ael. 5.1; Arr. *Tact.* 6.6; Maurice *Strat.* 12.B.16.27–29). Second, in the Hellenistic tradition οὐραγός, as the “rearguard,” also designated a single supernumerary officer attached to a larger field unit, whose
emperor’s overall command of the armed forces is also without parallel in the *Tacticon*. To summarise: the fragment contains a different numerical system from that outlined in Urbicius’ *Tacticon*, which for the most part uses different terminology for units and officers, and contains none of the information about deployment found in the fragment. In short, less than a third of the content of the fragment can have originated in the *Tacticon*.

If one insists upon the authenticity of the heading Ὀυρβικίου, it might initially be tempting to speculate—as previously did Scheffer and (by implication) Krumbacher and Förster—that the *Etymologicon Magnum* preserves a fragment of a lost work by Urbicius, and it is not impossible that Urbicius wrote other treatises. But this hypothesis would require Urbicius to have

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33 Insofar as the tenth-century topographical compendium known as the *Patria Constantinopolos* may be trusted, Urbicius was credited with “writing military works” (τοῦ ἱστορήσαντος τὰ στρατηγικά) of unspecified number: *Pat. Const.* 3.22 (ed. T. Preger, II 220.6–11). This may refer to the *Tacticon* and *Epitedeuma* only, or to these opuscula and/or additional works, though it is unlikely that the topographer was in possession of detailed information. On the doubtful reliability of this work, and specifically in relation to the “two Urbicii,” see A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Constantinopolos* (Poikila Byzantina 8 [Bonn 1988]) 211–212, 223–224, 228–229, 404–406, 586–587, 607; Greatrex et al. 40–41. All previous scholars have read the word στρατηγικά (some MSS. τὰ στρατηγικά) in this passage as generic “military works.” Recently Shuvalov I 83, 86, has attempted to argue that here is a reference to the actual title of a major treatise, i.e. Shuvalov’s putative “Strategicon of Urbicius” (cf. n.10 above), but this is no more than his wishful thinking and it is highly implausible that the tenth-century topographer accurately preserved, knew, or meant a specific title. For other examples of this middle-Byzantine usage of (τὰ) στρατηγικά cf. Nicephorus Phocas *De velitatione* 21.1, ed. G. Dagron and H. Mihaescu, *Le Traité sur la guérilla* (De velitatione) de l’empereur Nicéphore Phocas (Paris 1986) 119.11, οἱ τὰ τακτικὰ καὶ στρατηγικὰ ἀναγράφοντες. See also the extensive source-notice at the beginning of the *Tactica* of Nicephorus Uranus (*Constantinop.gr.* 36) listing the various τακτικὰ ἤχου στρατηγικὰ (sic) he has consulted: F. Blass, “Die griechischen und lateinischen Handschriften im alten Serail zu Konstantinopel,” *Hermes* 23 (1888) 219–233, at 225; Dain, *La “Tactique” de Nicéphore Ouranos* 13, 89–90, 93–95; Dain (1946) 150–151; Dain/de Foucault
written another work, similar to the *Tacticon*, but substantially at odds with its content, which was somehow known uniquely to the twelfth-century compiler of the *Etymologicum Magnum*, but otherwise undocumented in the rich tradition of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine tactical writing. Furthermore, this proposition does not in any case acknowledge and account for the distinctive character of the fragment. We have already noted indications of the author’s attempt to amalgamate and reconcile conflicting sources descending from different literary traditions, which marks out the fragment as the construction of a compiler or antiquarian rather than an informed and coherent composition on military matters. The most striking characteristic of the fragment, however, is its lexical interest. The organisational section contains obvious genre terms or “tactica-speak” used by the writers of tactical treatises (σύνταγμα, συνταγματάρχης, πεντακοσίαρχος, μεραρχία, τέλος, τελάρχης, μεράρχης, φαλαγγάρχης, διφαλαγγάρχης, τετραφαλαγγάρχης, τετραφαλαγγάρχης, μέτωπον, προτοστάτης, ἐπιστάται) or words too commonplace to establish a connection with a particular source or genre (λόχος, λοχαγός, δεκάδαρχος, τάξις, ταξιάρχος, φάλαγξ, χώρας, στρατηγός, ἐπιστάτης, στρατιά, στράτευμα, τάγμα, ξυγόν, κέρας, πάρος, οὐραγός, ὤπισθοφύλαξ). But this lexical article is not merely a rehearsal of the standard technical vocabulary of Greek tactical writing; on the contrary, the fragment is conspicuous for its assemblage of rare words seldom attested in antiquity outside specialist lexica and in some cases otherwise unknown. These include poetic or archaising forms (ἀρχός); terminology not conventionally found in the late Hellenistic tradition followed by Urbicius (παραστάται, πεντηκοντοφύλαξ); and in particular a significant number of Atticising...
usages (πεμπάς, πεμπάδαρχος, δεκάς, πεντηκοσιακός, πεντηκόνταρχος, χιλιοστύς, μυριοστύς, μυρίαρχος).

This terminological eccentricity both underlines the lexical (rather than military) purpose of the author and points to a source within the genre of lexica or etymologica rather than tactica.

The only previous lexical compilation to contain these words is the Onomasticon of Julius Pollux. This work, produced in the later second century, is topical rather than alphabetic in arrangement, and covers a wider range of subjects, including warfare. It functions primarily as a thesaurus rather than a lexicon or etymologicum, compiling synonyms and specialist vocabularies, and serving principally as a handbook for Atticising rhetorical composition. It has not survived in its original form; all manuscripts derive from four incomplete and interpolated copies that in turn descend from a common hyparchetype, an epitome possessed and interpolated by Arethas of Caesarea (ca. 900–932). Examination of the vocabula militaria of the Onomasticon reveals the same body of vocabulary as found in the fragment (1.127–128):

καὶ ὁ μὲν ἐκ δεξιᾶς τοῦ πρώτου ζυγοῦ πρωτοστάτης, καὶ πᾶν τὸ μέτωπον, πρωτοστάται, ὁ δὲ παρ' ἑαυτὸν ταττόμενος, παραστάτης, ὁ δὲ ἐπ' αὐτῶν ἐξόπισθεν, ἐπιστάτης. τὸ δὲ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἐν τῷ βάθει ζυγόν, οὐρά καὶ οὐραγοὶ καλοῖτο δ' ἂν ὀμοιόμοιοι καὶ

the same rank: ὅταν δὲ λόχῳ λόχος παραστάτη, ὅταν λοχεῖόν λοχεῖόν καὶ οὐραγόν οὐράγον καὶ τοὺς μεταξὺ τοὺς ὀμοζύγους παρώνισθαι, σύλλογος ἐστιν τοῦ τοιοῦτον, οἰ δὲ ὀμόζυγοι τῶν λόχων πρωτοστάται ἢ ἐπιστάται διὰ τὸ παρ' ἄλλους ἠπαύσθαι παραστάται κεκλήροντα. Ael. 29.3 uses the word once but does not supply a definition (παραγγελοῦμεν ἐξελίσσειν τοὺς μετατεταγμένους παραστάτας εἰς οὐς προεῖχον τόπους); while it does not occur at all in Arrian’s Tactica. The fourth witness to the tradition, the Lexicon Militare, corroborates the definition given by Asclepiodotus but is clearly not derived from it, and this coincidence renders more likely the presence of παραστάται in the Urtext of this tradition (Lex.Mil. 8): παραστάται· οἱ ὀμοζύγοι τῶν λόχων πρωτοστάται καὶ ἐπιστάται διὰ τὸ παρ' ἄλλους ἠπαύσθαι (= Suda π. 444). For πεντηκοσίωνικες and παραστάταις see nn.36 and 38 below.

35 E. Bethe, Pollucis Onomasticon (Leipzig 1900–37) 41.16, prints παρ' αὐτῶν but the reading ἐπ' αὐτῶν in MSS. AV is undoubtedly correct—an ἐπιστάτης stands behind ἐξόπισθεν a πρωτοστάτης, while it is παραστάται who stand alongside him (παρ' ἑαυτῶν).
ο ἄρχον αὐτῶν οὐραγός. καλοῦνται δὲ καὶ ὑποσοφύλακες. καὶ οἱ ἄρχον οὐραγός. εὐώνυμον καὶ στράτης. στράτεμα, στρατιωτικόν, φάλαγξ, τάγμα, σύνταγμα. μέρη δ’ αὐτοῦ μυριστεῖς. ἐξεργαστεῖς. λόγος. δεικτὰς. καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες οἱ μὲν τοῦ παντὸς στρατηγοῦ καὶ συ- στράτηγοι καὶ υποστράτηγοι. ὀποτέροι οἱ ἄρχοντες. στράτης. ταξίαρχοι καὶ οὐραγοὶ καὶ μυρίαρχοι καὶ χιλιαρχοὶ καὶ λοχαγοὶ καὶ ἐκατατόνταρχοι καὶ δεκάδαρχοι καὶ πεπτά- δαρχοι. καὶ τῶν ἅπειρων ὑπαρχοὶ καὶ φύλαρχοι. Θηβαίων δὲ ἱδίον Βοιωτάρχης. καὶ Λακεδαιμονίων βασιλέως.

Juxtaposition of the texts of the fragment and the Onomasticon confirms that Pollux was the source for much of the vocabulary concerning deployment:


The author of the fragment slightly modified the wording of his exemplar and introduced three minor expansions, presumably with the aim of clarification, though certainly in two instances, and possibly all three, these interventions led him to err: he misunderstands the definition of παραστάτης and perhaps

36 As noted above, παραστάτης denotes the comrades stationed either side of a man in his rank, so e.g. Hdt. 6.117.3; Xen. Cyr. 3.3.59, 8.1.10, Hell. 6.5.43; Polyacen. 2.10.4; Asclep. 2.4; Lex.Mil. 8 (= Suda π 444). The author of the fragment appears to have misunderstood the definition in Pollux 1.127 ὁ δὲ παρ’ ἐκάστον ταττόμενος. παραστάτης. “the men deployed to each side.” and conceived instead οἱ δὲ παρ’ ἐκάστῳ ταττόμενοι οἰκήτα, δεξιῶν τε καὶ εὐώνυμον, οἱ αὐτοὶ καὶ παραστάται, i.e. apparently the men deployed on each flank of the formation.
also ἐπιστάτης, while the *hapax* ἑπτακοσιοφυλάξ* adduced as a synonym for ὀπισθοφυλάξ appears to be the author’s own formulation, the sense of which, both etymological and military, defies explanation.

With regard to the Atticising terminology for the units and unit-commanders of a decimal-based army outlined in the fragment, it is necessary to emphasise how rare these words are. Although a small number are individually registered in other lexica, Pollux’s *Onomasticon* and the *Etymologicum Magnum* are the only works in which all these terms are assembled, other than Pollux’s own source for this recherché vocabulary, Xenophon, chiefly the *Cyropaedia*. In particular, in the *Cyropaedia* Xen-

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37 It is not clear whether he has fully understood the meaning of ἐπιστάτης. Tactical manoeuvres that sought to increase or reduce the depth of a formation relied on a fundamental organisational arrangement in which each man in a file was alternately designated πρωτοστάτης or ἐπιστάτης; thus in an eight-man file positions 1, 3, 5, 7 were πρωτοστάται, while 2, 4, 6, 8 were ἐπιστάται: e.g. Ascl. 2.3, 5.2; Onas. 20; Ael. 5.1-4; *Arr. Ét.* 5, *Tact.* 6.4-6, 12.4-10; *Syrianus* *De re strat.* 15.56-61. Thus correctly Pollux 1.127: ὁ δὲ ἐν’ αὐτὸν (πρωτοστάτην) ἐξόπισθεν, ἐπιστάτης. The author of the fragment, however, writes οἱ δὲ ὀπίσθεν αὐτῶν (πρωτοστάτων) ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ βάθος ταττόμενοι, ἐπιστάται, importing the phrase ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ βάθος from Pollux’s subsequent definition of οὐραγοί, and wrongly implying that behind the front rank of πρωτοστάται all the men “deployed in the depth of the formation” (i.e. “through the ranks”) are classed as ἐπιστάται.

38 I can offer no explanation for πεντηκοσιοφυλάξ other than the observation that this word is attested only in the fragment and appears to be without historical foundations. As a synonym for ὀπισθοφυλάξ a “fifty-guard” makes no intrinsic or etymological sense, and why a rearguard might be so styled remains elusive. The author’s claim that “custom (ἡ συνήθεια) calls him (the rearguard) a pentêkontophulax” implies access to an alternative tradition, but this word is possibly his own fabrication, perhaps inspired by a corrupt text of his model: cf. Poll. 1.127: οὐραγός· καλοῦνται δὲ καὶ ὀπισθοφυλάκες, καὶ τὸ έργον οὐραγεῖν, καὶ ὀπισθοφυλακεῖν; *Etym.* *Magn.* 729.16–17: οὐραγός· ὁ αὐτὸς δὲ ὀπισθοφυλάξ· ἡ συνήθεια πεντηκοσιοφυλάκα αὐτὸν καλεῖ.

39 πεμπάς: Xen. *Cyr.* 2.1.22, 24, 26, 30, 3.22; 4.5.5; *Hell.* 7.2.6. πεμπάδαρχος: *Xen.* *Cyr.* 2.1.22, 23, 26, 30, 3.21; *Eq.* *Mag.* 4.9–10; cf. *Hesych.* δ 2703 πεμπάδαρχος· δεκάς: *Xen.* *Cyr.* 2.1.22, 24, 26, 30, 3.22; 4.2.27, 5.5; cf. *Hesych.* δ 2703. πεντηρισμός: Thuc. 5.69.3; *Xen. An.* 3.4.22; cf. *Harp.* 1 208.3 Dind., 177 Keaney (= *Phot. Lex.* μ 653; *Suda* λ 65, μ 1259). In support of πεντηρισμός Harpocrat cites Xenophon on the Spartans, although
In the context of sixth-century Persian history the detailed structure and terminology of this army is pseudo-historical, though it may partly reflect Xenophon’s knowledge of authentic Achaemenid military organisation of his own day, perhaps modified by contemporary Greek practices.40

In this organisational section of the fragment there is again evidence that the author has attempted to elaborate and amplify his source material without access to additional or alternative information. Two examples suffice. First, the only “non-Urbician” officer-title in the fragment which cannot be accounted for as a borrowing from Pollux’s *Onomasticon* is πεντηκόνταρχος, and in this instance it is telling that the author

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has strayed from the tradition: Pollux did not provide him with a classicizing term for a commander of a 50-strong πεντηκοστύς and so the compilator imported or guessed at a πεντηκοντάρχος. While this formulation for a “commander of fifty” makes intrinsic sense and is consistent with patristic and Byzantine usage, it does not in fact occur in the Greco-Roman tactical genre; indeed in classical literature πεντηκόνταρχος is restricted to a small number of Attic authors, for whom it meant exclusively a petty officer on a trireme, a historical context that baffled later lexicographers.41 Second, and similarly, administrative assistant of a τριήραρχος: Dem. 50.18, 19, 24, 25; Xen. Ath. Resp. 1.2; Pl. Leg. 707A, with J. S. Morrison and J. F. Coats, The Athenian Trireme (Cambridge 1986) 111. Atticist lexicographers in the Roman Empire knew that πεντηκόνταρχος correctly applied to a naval officer, but it is doubtful whether any understood the historical context of the classical Athenian trireme, and certainly some rationalised this grade as an unhistorical “commander of a penteconter”: Poll. 1.96 τριήραρχος, πεντηκόνταρχος, καυσίμος; 1.119 πλοία, οί δὲ ἄρχοντες τριήραρχοι καὶ πεντηκόνταρχοι καὶ ναύαρχοι; Harp. I 245.1–3 Dind. (210–211 Keane) πεντηκόνταρχος ὁ τῆς πεντηκόντων ἀρχων, ὡς δηλοῦ θησαυροῦν ἐν τῷ περὶ τῶν ἑπτάρχησιστάτων, ὅτι δὲ πεντηκόντορος ἐκαλεῖτο ἡ ναῦς ὑπὸ τὸν ἱεροσομόν πρόδηλον (= partially Phot. Lex. 411.7–9; Suda σ. 981). πεντηκόνταρχος is first used as a generic “leader of fifty” in LXX Ex. 18:21, 25, Deut. 1:15, 4 Reg. 1:9–11, 13–14, Is. 3:3, 1 Macc. 3:55, and this usage thence passed into biblical commentaries, patristic writings, and derivative chronicles. In the tactical genre πεντηκόνταρχος is unattested, though a πεντηκονταρχία is documented both as a 64-man unit of light infantry in the artificial organisational schema of the late Hellenistic tactical tradition (Asclep. 6.3; Ael. 16.1; Arr. Tact. 14.3; Lex.Mil. 30 [= Suda τ. 96]) or a generic “50-man” unit (Onas. 34.2). Only in middle Byzantine sources does πεντηκόνταρχος, ὡς occur as a specific officer-grade: Niceph. Phocas Prac.Milit., ed. E. McGeer, Sowing the Dragon’s Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century (Washington 1995) 1.1 (p.12.8–10), 1.4 (14.39), 10 (18.109–110); Anon. De re militari 1.175, ed. Dennis, Three Byzantine Military Treatises 246–326, at 254; Sylloge Tacticorum, ed. A. Dain (Paris 1938) 1.26, 20.2, 20.4, 35.6, 45.12, 46.5; Niceph. Uranus Tactica 56.1 (ed. McGeer 88.8–13), 64.4 (148.43); cf. Const. Porph. De thomatibus 1.28, ed. A. Pertusi (Rome 1952), πεντηκόνταρχος also occurs in chronicle sources, though it is unclear whether this is a generic usage or corresponds to an actual rank or title: V.Pachomii 75.9 (BHIG 1396a), ed. F. Hakl, Le Corpus athénien de Saint Pachome (Geneva 1982) 11–72, at 38, δέκαρχος, πεντηκόνταρχος, ἑπτάρχος, χιλιάρχος; Mirae. S. Demetrii, ed. P. Lemerle, Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius I (Paris 1979) 230.20. Later Byzantine lexicata register both the spurious “com-
the fragment lists a 500-strong unit called a πεντακοσιοστύς commanded by a πεντακοσιάρχος, both terms absent from Pollux’s *Onomasticon*. In the idealised army of the Hellenistic tactical tradition a πεντακοσιάρχης commands a body of 512 men, but this corps is correctly termed a πεντακοσιαρχία. Urbicius’ *Tacticon* rehearses this organisational schema, but supplies only the officer-titles and not the names of the units they command. Faced with this terminological gap, and with no additional corroborative sources at his disposal, the author of the fragment construed the term for the 500-man command of a πεντακοσιάρχος as a πεντακοσιοστύς, a unique usage he appears to have coined himself in accordance with the Atticising conventions for unit-names set out in Pollux’s word-list (e.g. πεντηκοσιοστύς, χιλιοστύς, μυριοστύς).

**Conclusions**

The following conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing analysis. The article στρατός in the *Etymologicum Magnum* does not contain a “fragment” (in the conventional sense) of the *Tacticon* of Urbicius, still less of a putative lost work by that author. Rather, this short self-contained military glossary labelled Ὀρβικίου, τῶν περὶ τὸ στράτευμα τάξεων is a commander of a penteconter” and the biblical/patristic “commander of fifty,” e.g. Phot. *Lex.* 411.4–5 πεντηκοσιάρχος· ὁ τῆς πεντηκοστῆς τοῦ τέλους ἄρχων; 7–9 πεντηκόνταρχος· ὁ τῆς πεντηκοστῆς τοῦ τέλους ἄρχων· εκάλειται δὲ πεντηκόνταρχος ἡ ὑπὸ πεντήκοντα ἐρεσσομένη ναῦς ( = Suda σ 981); *Lex.Seg.*, ed. I. Bekker, Anecdota Graeca I (Berlin 1814) 195–318, at 297.11–12, πεντηκόνταρχος· ὁ ἄρχων τῆς πεντηκοστῆς τοῦ τέλους καὶ τῶν πεντηκοστῶν.

42 Asclep. 2.10, 3.3; Ael. 9.6. 10; Arr. *Tact.* 10.9; *Lex.Mil.* 13; Syrianus *De re strat.* 15.68–69.

43 πεντακοσιοστύς occurs otherwise only in the sixth-century anonymous *De scientia politica dialogus* 4.15, ed. C. M. Mazzucchi, *Menae patricii cum Thoma referendario, de Scientia politica dialogus* (Milan 1982) p.3.15, though here the author does not in any case mean the title of a unit, but merely the elaborately Atticising numeral 500: ἀνὰ πεντακοσιοστύν ἀνδρῶν ἱππέων, “up to five hundred mounted men.” It is highly improbable that the author of the fragment knew this work, and πεντακοσιοστύς is most likely to be his own formulation. The only other occurrence of πεντακοσιοστύς is in Eustathius *Ad II. P* 173 (1052.46; III 827.27 van der Valk), but since *Etym. Magn.* was one of Eustathius’ principle lexical sources, a direct transmission can be assumed.
posite of two sources descending from two different literary traditions: \( A \), a representative of the late Hellenistic tradition of tactical writing initiated by Poseidonius of Apamea, which concerned the internal structure, deployment, and manoeuvres of an idealised and hypothetical phalanx of 16,384 men; \( B \), a witness to an older tradition of Atticising vocabulary for a pseudo-historical army organised along decimal lines, originating in Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, but in this instance mediated via Pollux’s *Onomasticon*. In terms of substance, nothing precludes identifying source \( A \) as any of the direct or indirect descendants of Poseidonius’ lost work (Asclepiodotus, Aelian, Arrian, Urbicius, Syrianus Magister), such is the uniformity of content among these treatises, but given the citation of Ὀρβικίος in the heading it is reasonable to accept that source \( A \) was Urbicius’ *Tacticon*, which provided the author of the article with an initial structural framework. The author probably had recourse to Urbicius’ spare and jejeune opusculum, rather than the more expansive representatives of this Hellenistic sub-genre, precisely because it offered a succinct and convenient resumé of terminology; indeed the principal reason for the preservation of the *Tacticon*, especially in such a high-quality production as *Ambros. gr. 139* (B 119 sup.), was its utility as a glossary of the arcane military vocabulary of the ancients rather than its relevance to contemporary practice, and one might conjecture that its later, and perhaps even original, function was as a guide to reading classical military literature.\(^{44}\)

It also appears that in the minds of some Byzantine scholars of the tenth to thirteenth centuries the historically-distant Urbicius had acquired a wholly unmerited reputation as a great general and influential military theorist, whose name might thus serve as a mark of authenticity and antique authority in

\(^{44}\) The character of Urbicius’ *Tacticon* is aptly summarised by Mazzucchelli, *Aevum* 52 (1978) 282, “si riduce a un dizionario della falange.” Note that this codex (349–352\(^{v}\)) also contains the archetype of *Ad Basilium patricium Nauvichica*, a broadly analogous dictionary of nautical technicalia compiled by an unknown contemporary from classical sources, including Homer and Pollux’s *Onomasticon*. This work was presumably produced to assist Byzantine readers in their comprehension of the so-called *Corpus Nauticum*. See A. Dain, *Naumachica* (Paris 1943) 57–68; Dain/de Foucault (1967) 363.
discussions of military matters. The citation of Urbicius in the twelfth-century *Etymologicum Magnum*, in an article that derives only to a small degree from his writings, may therefore reflect a similar misconception of his significance. In reality, in the

45 Urbicius’ modest extant oeuvre of two short and formerly conjoined opuscula, the *Tacticon* and *Epitedeuma*, appears to have had no impact upon contemporaries nor any discernible Nachleben. He and his work pass unnoticed in late fifth-/sixth-century sources and he is never referred to, cited, nor quoted in the rich corpus of Byzantine military literature, which terminates ca. 1010. This 500-year obscurity stands in contrast to the re-emergence of Urbicius in the second half of the tenth century, though in sources and contexts of dubious historical credibility. The scribe of *Mediceo-Laurent.gr.* 55.4, the important collection of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine tactica compiled ca. 940–950, uniquely ascribed Maurice’s *Strategicon* to Urbicius, an historical impossibility according to internal indications of date, and demonstrably not the ascription the scribe found in his exemplar ε. This error appears in essence to be the product of a misreading of MAPIKIIOY as OYPBIKOY, and certainly the copyist was capable of blunders of this magnitude (e.g. at fol. 159v he wrongly assigns the poliorcetic treatise of Aeneas to Aelian via a similarly careless reading of the superscription AINEIOY as AIAIANOY), but his ascription of the *Strategicon* to Urbicius implies that the tenth-century scribe had at least heard of an Urbicius and knew him to be an author of military treatises. Cf. bibliography n.10 above. Slightly later, as previously noted (n.33), the frequently-inventive topographer who compiled the *Patria Constantinopolis* reports (3.22) that an Urbicius who lived during the reign of Anastasius was known for “writing military works,” and describes him as *patricius* and *magister militum per Orientem*, founder of an important church of the Theotokos, and epoynm of a district of Constantinople, all details unreported in any other source. On this basis *PLRE* II 1291 locates “Urbicius 2 Barbatus” (the epithet is modern and erroneous) in the fasti of magistri militum per Orientem within the lacuna of 506–516/8, though this apparently prominent dignitary does not exist outside the *Patria*, and Greatrex et al. 41 have recently expressed doubts concerning his historical reality, tentatively identifying a muddled doublet of the renowned praepositus sacri cubiculi of the same name (*PLRE* II 1188–90, Urbicius 1), who was an influential courtier and pious benefactor in the reign of Anastasius, but who in the *Patria* (1.58, 70; 3.6) is transformed into a semi-legendary figure misdated to the reign of Constantine. By the mid-thirteenth century the reputation of Urbicius the tactician had become embellished to such a degree that his name could be listed in a peculiar catalogue of the most illustrious generals of all time: Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris *In laudem Iohannis Ducæ Imperatoris* 14, ed. L. Tartaglia, *Teodorò II Duca Lascari, Encomio dell’Imperatore Giovanni Duca* (Naples 1990) 73.711–715, δεύτερο δὴ πάς βασιλέων ἀρίστων ἀλλὸς κατάλογος τῶν στρα-
lexical notice that bears his name, Urbicius’ *Tacticon* has been
tηγίᾳ μὲν ἐκλαμψάντων, ἀρετῇ δὲ καὶ φρονήσει βιωσάντων βασιλικῶς, ἵπται
Βρούτοι καὶ Κάτωνες, Ἀντώνιοι τε καὶ Αὐγάπης, Ἀδριανοί καὶ Τραϊάνοι,
Πομπηίοι τε καὶ Οὐρβίκιοι καὶ πᾶς ἄλλος βασιλικὸς χορὸς ἀνθραγήσατα καὶ
χάριτι κλεϊζόμενος (“Here indeed is another full list of the best emperors
who were distinguished for their generalship, or those who with virtue and
prudence have lived in the manner of emperors, all the Brutuses and Catos,
Antonys and Hannibals, Hadrians and Trajans, Pompeys and Urbiciuses,
and the all the rest of the imperial chorus celebrated for their courage and
generosity”). The imperial or quasi-imperial status accorded to Urbicius
here presumably reflects the now-complete fusion of Urbicius the *stratégiste
camou* and Mauricius the emperor.

It is not clear what precisely inspired
this tenth-century re-invention of Urbicius, though one likely source of con-
fusion was the existence of a panegyrical epigram which extols the merits of
a military work written by an Urbicius during the reign of Anastasius. In
these twelve lines of verse, without doubt composed by Urbicius himself or a
close associate, the treatise in question introduces itself to the reader as a re-
vival or reworking of an ancient text “which once the Emperor Hadrian
had beside him in his wars, / which for ages lay disused and nearly for-
gotten, / but in the reign of the firm-handed Emperor Anastasius / I was
released into the light again” ἣν πάρος Ἀδριανὸς μὲν ἄναξ ἔχεν ἐν πολέ-
μοι, / κρύψε δ’ ἀερίην χρόνον ἄσπετον ἐγγύθι λήθης, / ἀλλ’ ὕπο καρτερό-
χέμος Ἀναστασίου βασιλῆος / ἑλθον ἐς φάος αὖθις. The object of praise is
unquestionably Urbicius’ *Tacticon*, an epitome of Arrian’s *Ars Tactica*, the
latter written expressly to celebrate Hadrian’s vicennalia and fashioned with
elements of panegyric to gain imperial interest and endorsement (cf. bib-
liography n.6 above). Furthermore, this epigram immediately pre-
cedes Urbicius’ *Tacticon* in Ambros.gr. 139 (92v), the unique manuscript prototype,
where it serves as a verse preface. It also found its way into the *Palatine
Anthology* 9.210, in which the lemma similarly links it to “a tactical book of
Urbicius” εἰς βίβλιον τακτικῶν Οὐρβικίου). No other Greek, Roman, or
Byzantine military treatise is the subject of panegyric, and this unusual lit-
erary adjunct to what was, in Byzantium, a traditionally low-brow technical
genre, certainly attracted scholarly interest and even prompted the compo-
sition of supplementary hexametric verses during the reign of Leo VI (886–
912). See Förster 462–463; Dain/de Foucault (1968) 124–127; A. Cameron,
*The Greek Anthology: from Meleager to Planudes* (Oxford 1993) 149–150, 333,
336; Greatrex et al. 40; contra Shuvalov I 83–85, ΙΙ 41 with 40 fig. 2 (with
errors and to be read with great caution). I plan to treat this complex topic
in a separate study, but it suffices here to suggest that the rhetorical hyper-
bole of these antique laudatory verses may have led unwary scholars of the
ten-th-century Macedonian Renaissance to invest Urbicius with an unde-
served fame quite disproportionate to his minor historical and literary
significance.
so radically modified and augmented that the contribution of his work is all but obliterated and reduced to a deeply-buried and barely-discriminable textual substratum, in effect an endo-skeleton fleshed out using material drawn from Pollux's *Onomasticon*. The relative debt owed by the “fragment” to these two sources is illustrated below, with borrowings from Pollux signified in bold and those from Urbicius underlined:

_Etym. Magn._ 728.48–729.18

Ωρθότερον, τόν περὶ τὸ στράτευμα τάξεων. Ἑστέον δὲ, ὅτι τόν περὶ τὸ στράτευμα τάξεων καὶ ἱγμονείᾳ, ὥς ἐν γαίτι αὐτῶν ἁρμόδιοι καλεῖται πεμπάς· ὃ δὲ ἄρχον, πεμπάδαρχος· ὃ δὲ τῶν δέκα. ἰδίας, καὶ δεκάδαρχος· ὃ δὲ τῶν πέντε· καὶ εἴκοσι· λόχος, καὶ λοχαγός· ὃ τῶν πεντηκοσίων. πεντακοσίος· ὃ τῶν ἑκατόν· τάξις, καὶ ταξίαρχος· ὃ τῶν πεντηκοσίων· καὶ διστάσεως. 

In this process of amalgamation the author of the article not only struggled to reconcile the two conflicting traditions, but also sought to amplify his source material on the basis of his own often-misconceived deductions, which suggest that he was both devoid of expertise in the practice and literature of warfare and writing at a significant chronological remove from his sources. While it is not possible to divine when and by whom this mélange was executed, the multi-source, “cut-and-paste” method of its author resembles that of the compiler of the
Etymologicum Magnum as a whole, as previously exemplified by his blending of the glosses s.v. στρατός from the Etymologicum Genuinum and Etymologicum Gudianum. Given this similarity of technique, combined with the primarily lexical interest of the item, it is legitimate to speculate that the “fragment” was not a pre-existing article, but that its author and the compilator of the Etymologicum Magnum were one and the same.

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