VEGETIUS' *EPITOMA REI MILITARIS*: INSTITUTIONS, RULES, AND RECEPTION

by

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(Under the Direction of Erika T. Hermanowicz)

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how Vegetius' historical perspective in the *Epitoma rei militaris* was expressed in pragmatic rules and how those *regulae* were transferred into a Byzantine context in Maurice's *Strategikon*. The first chapter assesses Vegetius' historical perspective, specifically the primacy of institutions as the cause of Roman success. The second chapter consists of a discussion of the *regulae bellorum generales* (*Epit.* 3.26.1-34), their authenticity, and how they relate to the pragmatic and genre-specific functions of the work. The final chapter explores what the Greek translation of Vegetius' *regulae* in Maurice's *Strategikon* reveals about the reception of Vegetius' work in the Byzantine empire.

INDEX WORDS: Military handbooks, Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris*, *disciplina*, *De re militari*, *regulae bellorum generales*, maxims, rules, Maurice, Maurikios, *Strategikon*

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INTRODUCTION

Other Romans, notably Cato, Celsus, Frontinus, and Paternus, wrote similar works, but Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus' *Epitoma rei militaris* – a late fourth or early fifth century text – survives as the only extant Latin "art of war." Although ostensibly a mere repackaging of older texts, the *Epitoma* in fact presents a coherent program of reform to the Roman emperor. Vegetius consistently argues for a small, highly-trained, and well-disciplined army. Quality beats quantity; training trumps natural ability. This view aligns with Vegetius' historical perspective – an assessment of history that links Rome's success to her institutions and emphasizes the efficacy of didactic literature in serving the state. Vegetius' outlook finds its most compressed expression in his list or *regulae bellorum generales* (3.26.1-33), a list which would exert considerable influence for centuries.

The *Epitoma* is well worth studying as a late antique work of military instruction both on account of its unique perspective on the army during the period and due to the work's enduring influence on Western military theory and practice. During the medieval period, the text enjoyed such great popularity that one modern scholar has described the *Epitoma* as the "bible of warfare throughout the middle ages."[1] During the Renaissance, Vegetius' influence as a military authority continued for moralistic, antiquarian, and practical reasons. Despite this prodigious *Nachleben*, Vegetius has in many ways been

[1] Walter Goffart, "The Date and Purpose of Vegetius' 'De Re Militari,'" *Traditio* 33 (1977): 65.

neglected by non-specialists.[2] To overlook technical military literature is to ignore an important facet of ancient culture and intellectual life. Military handbooks were part of a wider genre of didactic literature, both for the armchair general and for the field commander.[3] But aside from the relationship of military handbooks to other technical works, the genre can help illuminate representations of warfare in other contexts. War was perceived as a central part of the human experience. For Heraclitus, it was "the father of all," for Plato's Clinias, "a natural state of undeclared war existed between all cities," and for Vegetius, war was the indispensable craft, "without which other arts are not able to exist."[4] How the ancient Greeks and Romans approached warfare, even in tedious works on military science, is fundamental to our understanding of classical society.

To date, most Vegetian scholarship has focused on *Quellenforschung* and dating the *Epitoma*. The text's composition has a *terminus post quem* of AD 383, the death of Gratian, because he is called *divus Gratianus* by Vegetius (1.20), and a *terminus ante quem* of 450, since a copier of the text, one Flavius Eutropius, included the date of 450 in an addendum which has come down to us in the ε family of manuscripts. Between these dates, scholarly opinion is divided over Vegetius' addressee. The majority view rests

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[2] Cf. Victor Davis Hanson, "The Status of Ancient Military History: Traditional Work, Recent Research, and On-Going Controversies," *The Journal for Military History* 63.2 (Apr., 1999): 386, "few Latin authors have been so widely quoted and little read by modern scholars."

[3] For a discussion of the genre and the problem of its practical use in antiquity, see Brian Campbell, "Teach Yourself How to Be a General," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987): 13-29.

[4] Heraclit., fr. 44, "Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους." Pl., *Leg.* 626a "ἦν γὰρ καλοῦσιν οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰρήνην, τοῦτ' εἶναι μόνον ὄνομα, τῷ δ' ἔργῳ πάσαις πρὸς πάσας τὰς πόλεις ἀεὶ πόλεμον ἀκήρυκτον κατὰ φύσιν εἶναι." Veg., *Epit.* 3.praef, "O uiros summa admiratione laudandos, qui eam praecipue artem ediscere uoluerunt, sine qua aliae artes esse non possunt!" All translations, unless otherwise, noted are my own.

with Theodosius I (379-395), but a recent monograph by Michael B. Charles has made a case for Valentinian III (425-455).[5]

Rather than attempting to address this seemingly intractable problem, this thesis explores Vegetius' historical perspective, its relationship to Vegetius' general rules of war (*regulae bellorum generales*), and how those *regulae* were transferred into a Byzantine context in Maurice's *Strategikon* (late sixth or early seventh century AD). This research will broaden our understanding of the purpose and development of military literature, specifically over the course of the transition from the Roman empire of late antiquity to that of the early Middle Ages. The first chapter examines Vegetius' historical perspective, specifically the primacy of institutions as the cause of Roman success. The second chapter discusses the *regulae bellorum generales* (3.26.1-34), their authenticity, and how they relate to the pragmatic and genre-specific functions of the work. The final chapter explores what the Greek translation of Vegetius' *regulae* in Maurice's *Strategikon* reveals about the reception of Vegetius' work in the Byzantine empire.

[5] Michael B. Charles, *Vegetius in Context: Establishing the Date of the* Epitoma Rei Militaris, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007). Walter Goffart, "The Date and Purpose of Vegetius' 'De Re Militari,'" 65-100, has also marshalled evidence in favor of a Valentinian date. For recent arguments in favor of Theodosius I, cf. T. D. Barnes, "The Date of Vegetius," *Phoenix* 33.3 (Autumn, 1979): 254-257, and N. P. Milner, ed., trans., *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, 2nd edition (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), xxxvii-xli. Other emperors, such as Honorius, have also been put forth, but only with minority support.

CHAPTER 1

VEGETIUS' HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

When making his argument for the Roman legion, Vegetius states that "proof of its success is the greatness of Rome, which, by always fighting with legions, conquered as many enemies as either it wished or the nature of things permitted."[6] In contrast to this picture of Rome's past, Vegetius presents a narrative of decline which he explains as the product of neglect in training and organization. The *Epitoma rei militaris*, however, is far more than a polemic against recent practice or an antiquarian glorification of republican and imperial successes. Instead, Vegetius lays out a coherent proposal of reform couched as a return to Rome's *legio antiqua*. At the heart of the *Epitoma* lies an assumption that the most important forces of historical change – both for better and for worse – are the institutions of the state. This perspective is bound up with a belief in the efficacy of didactic literature to shape Roman military policy.

These strains of thought have their origins in the historical literature of the second and first centuries BC. This chapter will trace the penetration of this institutionalized view of history through the military writers of the Roman republic and empire in an attempt to understand how Vegetius follows and departs from his predecessors. Vegetius' focus on institutions is unique in that it assigns almost no role to *fortuna* or *providentia*. His view that written works are the best way to serve the state can also be identified in older texts. This element of Vegetian thought is tempered by the

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[6] Veg., *Epit.* 2.2.12, "Documentum est magnitudo Romana, quae semper cum legionibus dimicans tantum hostium vicit quantum vel ipsa voluit vel rerum natura permisit."

panegyrical nature of the work, but Vegetius still trusts in the power of didactic military literature to affect institutions positively.

Environment

In ancient thought, a common trope of historical explanation was environmental determinism, a belief that climate and geography had a direct effect on one's constitution, both physical and moral. The *locus classicus* for this notion is in book 9 of Herodotus' *Histories* where he states that soft lands produce soft peoples, but hard lands make hardy men.[7] To be sure, Herodotus also chooses to emphasize *νόμος*, but the belief that climate had a strong effect on ethnic characteristics never disappears. The appearance of a similar line of thinking in the Hippocratic corpus suggests that this interpretation was not original to Herodotus but was an important element of Greek thought in the classical period.[8] In his *Politics,* Aristotle offers up a similar environmental perspective.[9]

Roman authors continued to rely on these geographic explanations in historical, scientific, and philosophical writings. In Cicero's *Republic*, for instance, there is a discussion of the disadvantages of coastal cities. Cicero cites these as the reasons for the fall of Corinth and Carthage:

> The people who inhabit those cities do not hold fast to their ancestral homes but are seized by transient hopes and thoughts, and even when they remain in their bodies, nevertheless, in their minds they wander and live as exiles. Nothing ruined and undermined Carthage and Corinth more than this wandering and scattering of their citizens, because – out of a desire for trading and sailing – they neglected the maintenance of fields and arms.[10]

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[7] Hdt., 9.122, "φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς γίνεσθαι· οὐ γάρ τι τῆς αὐτῆς γῆς εἶναι καρπόν τε θωμαστὸν φύειν καὶ ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς τὰ πολέμια." Cf. 3.106-111.
[8] Hipp., *Aer.* 12.
[9] Arist., *Pol.* 7.6-7.
[10] Cic., *Rep.* 2.7.3-4, "iam qui incolunt eas urbes non haerent in suis sedibus, sed volucri semper spe et cogitatione rapiuntur a domo longius, atque etiam cum manent corpore, animo tamen exulant et vagantur. nec vero ulla res magis labefactatam diu et Carthaginem et Corinthum pervertit aliquando, quam hic error ac dissipatio civium, quod mercandi cupiditate et navigandi et agrorum et armorum cultum reliquerant."

In contrast to these maritime cities, Rome sat at an ideal position, far enough inland to remain safe from the dangers and vices of seafaring peoples, but close enough to the sea to reap the economic benefits of trade.[11] Cicero goes on to cite institutional reasons for Rome's greatness, but it is important to note that his "archaeology" begins with a geographic explanation.[12]

In the area of more technical works, Latin authors extensively appeal to the environment to rationalize Roman success. Vitruvius, in the sixth book of *De architectura*, ruminates on how temperature and climate influence the human body.[13] While southern and northern peoples are adversely affected by harsh climes, divine providence decreed that Italy be perfectly temperate and most conducive to physical strength and mental fortitude.[14] Pliny the Elder remarks that northern and southern peoples are inclined toward extreme behavior, but peoples in the middle of the world are endowed with a proper balance of physical and mental characteristics.[15] According to Pliny, this scientific fact has macro-historical results:

> In this middle region of the earth…there are empires, which people on the periphery have never possessed, but they also have not been subject to the former, because they are separated and solitary according to the divine will of nature compelling them.[16]

Later encyclopedic writers interpret Roman history in the same way.[17] This ethnographic perspective penetrated other genres, notably works of history in which writers like

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[11] Ibid., 2.10-11.
[12] Perhaps influenced by Thuc., 1.2.
[13] Vitr., 6.1.8-12.
[14] Ibid., 6.1.11, "Namque temperatissimae ad utramque partem et corporum membris animorumque vigoribus pro fortitudine sunt in Italia gentes."
[15] Plin., *Nat.* 2.189-190.
[16] Ibid., 190, "medio vero terrae…imperia, quae numquam extimis gentibus fuerint, sicut ne illae quidem his paruerint, avolsae ac pro numine naturae urguentis illas solitariae."
[17] Isid., *Orig.* 9.2.105.

Caesar, Tacitus, and Ammianus sought to explain interactions between Roman and barbarian.[18]

Likewise, Vegetius, in his section on recruitment, uses this same sort of environmental reasoning. He writes approvingly of the work done by *doctissimi homines*:

> Indeed it is apparent that in all places both cowardly and brave men are born, but still, nation outstrips nation in war, and climate (*plaga caeli*) has a strong effect not only on the strength of the body, but even more on the strength of the mind. On this point I will not leave out those things which have been proven by the most learned of men (*doctissimis hominibus*).[19]

Vegetius then rehearses the traditional ethnographic arguments. Southern peoples, being closer to the sun, have less blood, and so are more intelligent but less inclined to shed their blood in battles. Northern peoples are more reckless, but braver when it comes to fighting. Predictably, Vegetius advocates recruiting from the more temperate regions, as these produce a balance of bravery and prudence.[20]

While this ethnographic section is certainly indebted to ancient Roman medical beliefs,[21] it may also be motivated by Vegetius' attitude toward barbarians. If Vegetius wrote soon after Adrianople, he, like Ammianus, may have been suspicious of foreign peoples within the empire and army.[22] On the other hand, if we assume a post-Theodosian date, animosity toward barbarians may also make sense, for the use of

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[18] Caes., *Gal.* 6.11-28; Tac., *Ag.* 10-12, *Ger.* 4; Amm., 22.8, 22.15-16.
[19] Veg., *Epit.* 1.2.2, "Constat quidem in omnibus locis et ignavos et strenuos nasci, sed tamen et gens gentem praecedit in bello et plaga caeli ad robur non tantum corporum sed etiam animorum plurimum valet; quo loco ea quae a doctissimis hominibus comprobata sunt non omittam."
[20] Ibid., 1.2.5, "Tirones igitur de temperatioribus legendi sunt plagis."
[21] N.P. Milner, ed., trans., *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, 2nd edition (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), 3, n. 5, suggests that this notion was "transmitted to Vegetius through Varro."
[22] Michael B. Charles, *Vegetius in Context: Establishing the Date of the* Epitoma Rei Militaris (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007), 144-154, argues that Vegetius' attitude would not have sat well with Theodosius I, an emperor who made extensive use of *foederati*.

foederati had become controversial after a number of deceptions and betrayals.[23] Setting aside the thorny issue of dating the *Epitoma rei militaris,* internal evidence reveals a deep-seated distrust of barbarians. In accordance with his desire to return to the *legio antiqua*, Vegetius states that it is cheaper to train native troops than to hire foreign mercenaries.[24] Later in the work, he returns to the theme, writing that "there should never be a larger number of allied auxiliaries in the camp than Roman citizens."[25] These statements, taken along with Vegetius' assertions about recruitment, demonstrate misgivings about the barbarization of the military.

Nevertheless, this isolated passage does not prove that environmental factors played a significant part in Vegetius' historical perspective. The catalogue of peoples suitable for recruitment is only meant to "group together, in quasi-chronological and geographical order, valiant peoples" from history.[26] In the rest of the *Epitoma,* geographic and environmental explanations do not feature prominently. Instead, the emphasis is on *disciplina* and its ability to overcome nature. Consider the well-known maxim that "nature produces few brave men, hard work with good instruction renders many so."[27] After the preface, the first book itself opens with the statement that it is not sheer numbers (*multitudo*) or unlearned bravery (*virtus indocta*), but skill (*ars*) and

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[23] Charles, *Vegetius in Context*, 144. Cf. Synes., *De regno* 22-23.
[24] Veg., *Epit.* 1.28.10, "vilius enim constat erudire armis suos quam alienos mercede conducere." 1.13.5, criticizes the practice of giving tribute to foreign peoples. Riches do not bend the enemy to obey Rome; only by the fear of arms (*solo terrore…armorum*) can the enemy be kept down.
[25] Ibid., 3.1.12, "ne umquam amplior multitudo socialium auxiliarium esset in castris quam civium Romanorum." 3.2 explains some of the reasons why *auxilia* are inferior to *legiones*.
[26] Charles, *Vegetius in Context*, 97. Cf. Walter Goffart, "The Date and Purpose of Vegetius' 'De Re Militari,'" *Traditio* 33 (1977): 77.
[27] Ibid., 3.26.12, "Paucos viros fortes natura procreat, bona institutione plures reddit industria." Cf. 1.1.2, "Nulla enim alia re uidemus populum Romanum orbem subegisse terrarum nisi armorum exercitio, disciplina castrorum usuque militia."

training (*exercitium*) that produce victory.[28] Some peoples may be more suited than others for battle, but it is through rigorous practice that men become better soldiers. Discipline, not biology, makes men fight well. Never does Vegetius explicitly describe Italy as the best climate, nor does he return to the topic of climate and its effect on physiology again in his *Epitoma*.[29] Vegetius tips his hat, as it were, to the ethnographic and medical traditions, but his focus is on concrete steps that should be taken to improve an army.[30]

An insufficient number of fragments survive from the handbooks of Cato, Celsus, Frontinus, and Paternus to determine to what degree this is characteristic of the genre. Celsus' limited discussion of climate in his *De medicina* may suggest a more detailed treatment of physiology in his treatise on military science, but this is speculation.[31] The fact that Pliny the Elder could refer to Cato's book on soldiery as *De militari disciplina* – instead of *De re militari* – implies an emphasis on training, although recruitment must also have been a feature of the text.[32] Since Vegetius' work is an epitome, it is likely that

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[28] Ibid., 1.1.1, "In omni autem proelio non tam multitude et virtus indocta quam ars et exercitium solent praestare victoriam." M.D. Reeve, ed. *Vegetius: Epitoma rei militaris* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), xxxv, leaves out this sentence because the maxim is "unsuited to its position," but Milner, *Vegetius*, 2, n. 5, argues for its inclusion based on the fact that the next sentence begins with *enim*, an awkward adverb without the preceding maxim. Whatever the case, the rest of *Epit.* 1.1 points out that the Romans have surpassed other peoples, not by nature, but by better recruitment, training, exercise, and punishments.
[29] Cf. Milner, *Vegetius*, 3, n. 5, "The fullest expression of [environmental effects on character] may be found in Vitr., 6.1. Vegetius omits the climax that the perfect mix of qualities was to be found in the Roman people and peoples of Italy, but allows the inference to be drawn that barbarians were unsuitable."
[30] Cf. Veg., *Epit.* 1.3-7 for Vegetius' discussion of particular physiques and professions. The ideal soldier will be a tall, young farmer, but recruiters should be flexible. Vegetius' attitude toward recruitment is focused on choosing soldiers who will be most receptive to training. Theoretically, given the right training, anyone can become a good soldier, but it is best to choose soldiers most conducive to military life.
[31] Cels., praef.71, 1.20, 2.8-11, 3.6-7, 4.32.
[32] Plin., *Nat.* praef. 30. Veg. *Epit.* 2.3.6, also refers to *disciplina* in close connection with Cato's work. Cato, *Agr.* praef.4, mentions the recruitment of soldiers. For a list of extant fragments from Cato's *De re militari*, see Henry Jordan, ed., *M. Catonis Praeter Librum De Re Rustica Quae Extant* (Lipsiae: Teubner, 1860), 80-82.

past treatises had similarly raised the issue of nature before focusing squarely on the singular importance of nurture.

Generalship

Because ancient military handbooks were addressed to military commanders, it is perhaps understandable that generalship is a common feature of these texts. Vegetius dedicates his *Epitoma* to the emperor, nominally the commander of all Roman armies. But while proper intelligence, tactical expertise, and strategic acumen are integral parts of the treatise, they are never invoked to explain Roman success over the course of history. To the contrary, training, proper organization, and military literature are featured prominently. If Vegetius' work is compared to the literature of stratagems, we begin to see that his *Epitoma* focuses more on institutional and organizational qualities than individual decisions. This is in part due to generic differences between stratagemic texts and military handbooks that focus on the particulars of drill and military structure.

Both of the stratagem collections that survive from antiquity naturally frame the decisions of generals as the most important part of military operations. Frontinus' *Strategemata* aims to summarize the "clever deeds of generals" (*sollertia ducum facta*), although his work on "military science" (*rei militaris scientiam*) may have had a different emphasis.[33] Polyaenus begins his treatise on stratagems with an encomium of the shrewdness and cunning of Ulysses.[34] Onasander's *Strategicus*, although not a stratagem collection, is more explicit in its endorsement of generalship as the cause of Roman greatness. In his prologue, he writes, "it seems to me that [the Romans], after surpassing

[33] Front., *Strat.* 1.praef.
[34] Polyaen., 1.praef.

the boundaries of Italy, extended their empire to the boundaries of the earth not by fortune (*τύχῃ*) but by deeds of generalship (*στρατηγικαῖς*)."[35]

Many historians of antiquity picked up on this command-oriented approach. Battle narratives, even in the modern period, tend to focus on the decisions of the commander and their role in deciding an engagement.[36] Polybius may have even used stratagem collections in composing his histories.[37] In fact, descriptions of Cannae found in Polybius, Livy, Plutarch, and Appian, use the language of stratagems to describe the arrangement of troops. Plutarch, for instance, writes that "Hannibal employed two stratagems in the battle," and considers this a key reason for the outcome.[38]

Vegetius does not ignore the deeds of generalship in his *Epitoma*. The third book, especially, focuses on the actions which a leader must take. The advice given at 3.4, a section dealing with how a commander is to prevent mutinies, almost resembles the prescriptions of a stratagem collection. Likewise, 3.6 emphasizes the knowledge which the general must have of the battlefield. The tone of the *regulae bellorum generales*, the "general rules of war," also centers on the person of the commander.[39] The prologues and epilogues of the *Epitoma*, with their praise of the emperor's martial abilities, also seem to elevate the role of the commander.

Nevertheless, the focus of Vegetius' treatise is decidedly on mundane matters of training, logistics, and strategic principles rather than the finesse of the commander. His

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[35] Onas., praef., "οὐ γὰρ τύχῃ μοι δοκοῦσιν ὑπεράραντες τοὺς τῆς Ἰταλίας ὅρους ἐπὶ πέρατα γῆς ἐκτεῖναι τὴν σφετέραν ἀρχήν, ἀλλὰ πράξεσι στρατηγικαῖς."
[36] John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976).
[37] Everett L. Wheeler, "Polyaenus: *Scriptor Militaris*," in *Polyainos: Neue Studien*, ed. Kai Broderson (Berlin: Verlag Antike e.K., 2010), 21.
[38] Plut., *Fab.* 16.1-3, "ἐν δὲ τῇ μάχῃ στρατηγήμασιν ἐχρήσατο...πρώτῳ δὲ...δευτέρῳ δὲ...ὃ δὴ καὶ δοκεῖ τὸν πλεῖστον ἀπεργάσασθαι φόνον."
[39] Veg., *Epit.* 3.26.1-33. Dankfrid Schenk, *Flavius Vegetius Renatus: Die Quellen der Epitoma rei militaris* (Aalen: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1963), 60, identifies a greater incidence of 2nd person verbs in this section and indeed in all of book 3.

is not a work outlining clever stratagems or wily maneuvers. Instead, the advice for the commander pertains to the simple business of how to manage an army on campaign and prevent the enemy from acquiring knowledge of your plans. Much of this is commonplace material, surely influenced by literary antecedents and the panegyrical nature of the work. The fact that none of the prefaces gives much attention to the general – aside from the emperor – is surely significant. Even Hannibal, a paragon of military genius, only won his battles due to his Spartan military instructor, and, likewise, Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus would not have beaten Sertorius if he and his men had not trained so frequently.[40] For Vegetius, it is on the training ground, not the battlefield, that wars are won.[41]

Institutions

Although Vegetius at various times emphasizes the environment and the skill of the commander as relevant, he most consistently underlines the primacy of institutions. This view had a long pedigree, with its most clearly articulated form appearing in the second century BC. In Herodotus' histories, *νόμος* consistently appears as an important force, but it is generally used in a cultural rather than institutional sense. Thucydides at times uses institutions to explain historical events,[42] but he is generally more interested in the immutable qualities of human nature. Polybius stands out as the first historians to link Roman success explicitly to her institutional strengths.[43] The preface to his history memorably states that the work will explain "how and under what sort of polity (*τίνι γένει*

[40] Ibid., 3.praef.7, 1.9.9.
[41] Ibid., 3.26.2, "In bello qui plus in agrariis vigilaverit, plus in exercendo milite laboraverit, minus periculum sustinebit."
[42] e.g. Thuc., 5.66-72.
[43] Brian McGing, *Polybius' Histories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 169, "This analysis is, as far as we know, the first attempt to apply Greek political theory to the reality of Roman governmental structures and history, and the only attempt by someone who was technically an outsider to understand Roman success in terms of its constitutional excellence."

πολιτείας) the Romans brought nearly the whole inhabited world under one empire in less than 53 years."[44] This is Polybius' refrain.[45] For him, a comparative study of institutions has explanatory power. In accordance with the purpose of his "universal history," he begins with a comparison between different empires to demonstrate the exceptionalism of Rome.[46] At 18.28, Polybius compares the legion to the phalanx in order to understand the outcome of battles:

> It will be useful and good to study their differences and why it happens that the Romans prevail in battle and win first place in the contests of war, so that we may not thoughtlessly congratulate them, like rash men, saying that they only win on account of fortune (*τύχην*), but so that we may, knowing the true causes (*τὰς ἀληθεῖς αἰτίας*), commend and praise their leaders.[47]

The longest and most famous digression can be found in book 6, where Polybius analyzes Roman political, cultural, and military institutions. To be sure, the constitutional framework that he envisions – three main types of governments along with their degenerate counterparts – is indebted to Plato and other philosophers, as Polybius himself recognizes.[48] Still, the analysis, wedged inside a history, is unique in that it links the governmental, cultural, and military features of the Roman state to historical success. Polybius concludes his book with an anecdote from the Punic war to illustrate how the

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[44] Plb.., 1.5, "τίς γὰρ οὕτως ὑπάρχει φαῦλος ἢ ῥᾴθυμος ἀνθρώπων ὃς οὐκ ἂν βούλοιτο γνῶναι πῶς καὶ τίνι γένει πολιτείας ἐπικρατηθέντα σχεδὸν ἅπαντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν οὐχ ὅλοις πεντήκοντα καὶ τρισὶν ἔτεσιν ὑπὸ μίαν ἀρχὴν ἔπεσε τὴν Ῥωμαίων, ὃ πρότερον οὐχ εὑρίσκεται γεγονός;"

[45] Ibid., 1.2.7, 1.4.1, 3.1.4, 3.1.9, 3.2.6, 3.3.9, 3.4.2, 3.118.9, 4.2.3, 8.2.3, 39.8.7. F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius: Volume I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 40.

[46] Plb., 1.2.

[47] Ibid., 18.28.4-5, "χρήσιμον καὶ καλὸν ἂν εἴη τὸ τὴν διαφορὰν ἐρευνῆσαι, καὶ παρὰ τί συμβαίνει Ῥωμαίους ἐπικρατεῖν καὶ τὸ πρωτεῖον ἐκφέρεσθαι τῶν κατὰ πόλεμον ἀγώνων, ἵνα μὴ τύχην λέγοντες μόνον μακαρίζωμεν τοὺς κρατοῦντας ἀλόγως, καθάπερ οἱ μάταιοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλ' εἰδότες τὰς ἀληθεῖς αἰτίας ἐπαινῶμεν καὶ θαυμάζωμεν κατὰ λόγον τοὺς ἡγουμένους." Cf. 1.63.9 for another juxtaposition of *τύχη* and Roman institutions. Polybius' ensuing explanation, that the Macedonian phalanx is stronger but less flexible than the legion, is echoed in Plutarch's description of Cynoscephalae (*Flam.* 8), which was surely influenced by Polybius' account. Plut., *Aem.* 20, describes the battle of Pydna in similar terms.

[48] Plb., 6.5.1.

perfect organization of the Roman state produced model citizens steadfast in their deliberations.[49]

In his *De re publica*, Cicero follows the same pattern as Polybius in describing the Roman constitution. Rome is able to remain strong because she has a good balance of the three different types of governments. Cicero emphasizes the fact that Rome was able to import and improve the best qualities of foreign peoples:

> You will realize that the wisdom of our elders must be praised, because you will see that even those things taken from other peoples were made by us much better than they were in those places from which they had been taken and where they had first existed, and you will see that the Roman people have been strengthened not by chance (*non fortuito*) but by planning (*consilio*) and training (*disciplina*), yet still with fortune not opposing.[50]

Although Cicero never discusses the Roman military in detail in the extant sections of the *De re publica*, he consistently argues that Roman customs cultivated *disciplina*, *prudentia*, and *virtus*. The work implies that only through a return to the hallowed traditions of Rome's past can the state return to the peace and stability she once enjoyed.

This belief in the superiority of Roman institutions pervaded the historical writings of the first century AD. Josephus, for instance, famously describes Roman "maneuvers as bloodless battles and battles as bloody maneuvers."[51] He connects this military fortitude to historical success, stating that it is no wonder the Roman empire is so

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[49] Ibid., 6.58. After Cannae, Hannibal sent ten Roman captives to the Senate to negotiate the return of prisoners-of-war. He made them swear that they would return, but one of the ten went back into the camp claiming he had forgotten something in order to free himself from his pledge. When they arrived in Rome, the Senate refused to pay for the release of Roman prisoners, and then they forced the man who had absolved himself of his oath to return to Hannibal in chains. The story is also related by Cic., *Off.* 1.40.

[50] Cic., *Rep.* 2.30, "sapientiam maiorum statues esse laudandam, quod multa intelleges etiam aliunde sumpta meliora apud nos multo esse facta, quam ibi fuissent unde huc translata essent atque ubi primum extitissent, intellegesque non fortuito populum Romanum sed consilio et disciplina confirmatum esse, nec tamen adversante fortuna." The notion that Rome had improved on the customs of others, cf. Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.1.

[51] Jos., *De bello Iud.* 3.75, "καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἁμάρτοι τις εἰπὼν τὰς μὲν μελέτας αὐτῶν χωρὶς αἵματος παρατάξεις, τὰς παρατάξεις δὲ μεθ' αἵματος μελέτας."

large, given their military planning and efficiency: "if somebody examines the organization (σύνταξιν) of their army, he will learn that their possession of so great an empire is a prize of valor, not a gift of fortune."[52] Even if Polybius is not the primary source of Josephus' information, Polybius' digression on the Roman military probably suggested this passage, a testament to the continuity of this explanation in historiography.[53]

Vegetius, perhaps predictably for a handbook focused on training, discipline, and organization, likewise believes that historical success and failure are predicated on the quality of one's institutions. After his initial preface he begins by writing that the Romans, inferior to other nations in numbers, strength, wealth, and cunning, "conquered the world by no other means than by the training of arms (*armorum exercitio*), camp-discipline (*disciplina castrorum*), and by military organization (*usuque militiae*)."[54] This could be explained away as mere dicta introducing the first book on recruitment and training, but the other books of the *Epitoma* reiterate the same argument. In book 2, Vegetius explains that the size of the Roman Empire is proof that the legion is the best form of military organization;[55] the corollary is that the *legio* led the Romans to success, constrained only by *rerum natura*. Book 3, which focuses on field strategy and tactics, frequently appeals to the example of the *legio antiqua* for an explanation of proper organization and procedure. For instance, Vegetius contrasts the failure of massive

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[52] Ibid., 3.71, "εἰ δέ τις αὐτῶν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἄλλην σύνταξιν τῆς στρατιᾶς ἀπίδοι, γνώσεται τὴν τοσήνδε ἡγεμονίαν αὐτοὺς ἀρετῆς κτῆμα ἔχοντας, οὐ δῶρον τύχης." Cf. 3.107, where Josephus specifically comments on the extent of the Roman empire and its relationship to its military.
[53] Milner, *Vegetius*, xx-xxi. H. St. J. Thackeray, ed., trans., *Josephus: The Jewish War, Books I-III* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), 597, n. *d*.
[54] Veg., *Epit.* 1.1.2, "Nulla enim alia re videmus populum Romanum orbem subegisse terrarium nisi armorum exercitio, disciplina castrorum usuque militia."
[55] Ibid., 2.2.12, "Documentum est magnitudo Romana, quae semper cum legionibus dimicans tantum hostium vicit quantum vel ipsa voluit vel rerum natura permisit."

Persian armies with the long-term success of small and well-trained Roman armies which fought and won, "in nearly every year."[56] In the fourth book, Vegetius' basic argument is that naval readiness was the reason for the pacification of the sea.[57] Rome owed her domination of the known world to the customs of her ancestors.

By the same token, for Vegetius, bad *institutiones* were the cause of decline. In a famous passage, he complains that since the reign of Gratian (375-383) soldiers had ceased their field exercises (*campestris exercitatio*) and abandoned full armor due to their laziness (*neglegentia desidiaque*), and because of this they perished in droves against the Goths.[58] Later, he contrasts ancient battle practices with those of the recent past, complaining that generals, due to lack of experience (*per imperitiam*), did not give their troops sufficient rest and food prior to battle; this oversight directly led to defeat.[59] If *disciplina* and *exercitium* produced success, their neglect was the cause of failure.

Vegetius' framing of history is polemical and cannot be taken at face value. In no way was the army after Gratian unarmored.[60] Likewise, the very *legio antiqua* which Vegetius lauds is in many ways a fiction, an amalgamation of organization and practice from the republic, principate, and late empire.[61] Some features of the Vegetian legion

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[56] Ibid., 3.1, "annis prope omnibus." Other historical examples from book 3 include 3.6.9 (the ancients carried a *Minotauri signum*), 3.6.18-20 (*galearii* guarded the baggage train), 3.10.3 (Spartans and Romans abandoned all other fields of learning to cultivate military training), 3.11.3, 8 (ancients avoided arriving in battle hungry and tired), 3.14 (ancient battle array), 3.17 (reserves used by Carthaginians, Spartans, and then Romans).

[57] Ibid., 4.31.2, "Romanus autem populus pro decore et utilitate magnitudinis suae non propter necessitatem tumultus alicuius classem parabat ex tempore sed ne quando necessitate sustineret semper habuit praeparatam."

[58] Ibid., 1.20.1-10.

[59] Ibid., 3.11.8, "Hoc et ueteres declinarunt et superiore uel nostra aetate, cum Romani duces per inperitiam non cauissent, ne quid amplius dicam, exercitus didicerunt."

[60] Michael B. Charles, "Vegetius on Armour: The *Pedites Nudati* of the *Epitoma Rei Militaris*," *Ancient Society* 30 (2003): 127-167.

[61] Richard M. Van Nort, "The Battle of Adrianople and the Military Doctrine of Vegetius" (PhD Diss., City University of New York, 2007), 328 ff. Cf. Milner, *Vegetius*, xxviii-xxix.

appear to be the product of speculation and etymologizing.[62] While these facts have sometimes caused modern scholars to despair, this misunderstands the very purpose of Vegetius' work. The *Epitoma* is not a historical text but a political pamphlet intended to be used for reform. Vegetius at least believes his research to be legitimate; he refers to the need for "neither eloquence of words nor a sharp intelligence but a diligent and faithful labor."[63] He trusts in his program which he argues is rooted in his particular view of Roman institutions and their effect on history. Even modern scholars have difficulty agreeing how the Roman army functioned at a tactical level.[64]

It is clear that Vegetius picks up on the explanations of Roman success employed by Polybius, Cicero, and Josephus, but did he know their writings? As an educated Latin speaker, he must have been at least familiar with the works of Cicero.[65] Vegetius rarely names his sources, but he was familiar with Cato, Celsus, Frontinus, Paternus, Sallust, Virgil, and Varro.[66] We do not know whether he was acquainted with Cicero's *De re publica*, yet it does not lie outside the realm of possibility. Macrobius wrote a commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis* in the early fifth century, and Augustine frequently quotes the *De re publica*, so the text was still being circulated, at least in academic circles.

When confronted with Greek sources, a more difficult problem arises: we do not know how well Vegetius knew Greek. He only cites one Greek author, Homer, in the *Epitoma*, and he refrains from listing Greek military writers in his discussion of his

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[62] Veg., *Epit.* 2.15, for instance, wrongly places the *principes* in the front line.
[63] Ibid., 1.praef., "nec verborum concinnitas sit necessaria nec acumen ingenii sed labor diligens ac fidelis."
[64] Philipp Sabin, "The Face of Roman Battle," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 90 (2000).
[65] Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 357-8.
[66] Veg, *Epit.* (Cato) 1.8, 1.13, 1.15, 2.3; (Celsus) 1.8; (Frontinus) 1.8, 2.3; (Paternus) 1.8; (Sallust) 1.4, 1.9; (Virgil) 1.19, 4.41; (Varro) 1.41. Vegetius also professed to have borrowed from the *constitutiones* of Augustus, Trajan, and Hadrian (1.8). Much of Vegetius' material, particularly the older writings, probably came down to Vegetius indirectly through epitomes, cf. Milner, *Vegetius*, xvii-xxi.

sources.[67] Even his use of Greek words in his digression on ship construction may have been transcribed in Latin letters.[68] Perhaps the best reason to doubt that Vegetius knew Greek is that in his *Mulomedicina* he praises the Latin style of Chiron and Apsyrtus.[69] These authors probably actually wrote in Greek, so Vegetius must have relied on translations.[70] Could he have read Polybius or Josephus in translation? Perhaps, but their reception in late antique Latin is not very well attested. More likely, Vegetius interacted with their writings indirectly. Polybius and Josephus appear to have derived their military knowledge from preexisting Latin sources, such as technical manuals, Cato's *De re militari*, and (for Josephus) Celsus' handbook.[71] Were any of these texts still extant, we could more accurately trace the relationship between Vegetius and these Greek historians.

Although Vegetius' sources are far from clear, he nevertheless inherited the same explanations of Roman success which Polybius, Cicero, and Josephus employed. It is significant that Vegetius on very few occasions cites specific historical events and *exempla*. Instead, he presents the legion as a monolithic force which exerted uninterrupted influence upon the course of Roman history.[72]

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[67] Ibid., 1.5 alludes to Hom., *Il.* 5.801. Charles, *Vegetius in Context*, 43, n. 129, speculates that a Latin translation of the *Iliad* may have existed which Vegetius could have read.

[68] Veg., *Epit.* 4.40: *προχειμάζειν, χειμάζειν,* and *μεταχειμάζειν*. 4.38.6-12, is another possibility of Greek, as Greek letters appear in the δ family of MSS. For a discussion of this problem, cf. Charles, *Vegetius in Context*, 43-44. Charles points out that Vegetius' use of infinitives rather than substantives may betray an imperfect understanding of the Hellenic tongue. Be that as it may, the infinitive is a verbal noun, and it is not a huge stretch to use it as a substantive, even without an article (cf. Smyth, §1968a). Milner, *Vegetius*, 147, n.4, suggests Varro as a source of Vegetius' knowledge of the Greek terms.

[69] Veg., *Mul*. 1.

[70] Milner, *Vegetius*, xxxvi. Ernst Lommatsch, ed., *P. Vegeti Renati Digestorum Artis Mulomedicinae Libri* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1903), xxxvi-xxxvii.

[71] Ibid., xx-xxi.

[72] Vegetius, however, conceded that the size and organization varied with time (*Epit.* 2.2.3), "Romani legiones habent, in quibus singulis sena milia, interdum amplius, militare consuerunt."

Fortune and Divine Intervention

This evaluation of Rome's past flies in the face of much of the historiographic tradition. Divine intervention or influence persisted as a force of historical explanation into late antiquity. Florus prefaces his epitome of Roman history by saying that *fortuna* and *virtus* vied to establish Roman dominance.[73] Closer to Vegetius' time, Ammianus has Bellona "spring onto the stage" at critical moments of the history.[74] Both Christian and pagan writers tried to explain Roman failures as the result of impiety. The defeat at Adrianople, for instance, was at various times blamed on Valens' "homoian" Arianism and the death of Julian.[75] Some theologians even went so far as to ascribe eschatological significance to the event.[76] After the sack of Rome in AD 410, Augustine, even as he vehemently argued that Christians were not to blame, contended that divine providence had ordained not only the capture of the city but also its lenient treatment at the hands of the conquerors.[77]

Even historians who focus on institutions tend to balance their assessment by assigning some role to *fortuna*. The function of *τύχη* in Polybius' histories is much debated, but it is clear that she is presented as playing a serious and personified role in events.[78] Polybius may resort to fate as a last-resort explanation when the causes are not

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[73] Flor., *Epit.* 1.1, "tot in laboribus periculisque iactatus est, ut ad constituendum eius imperium contendisse Virtus et Fortuna videantur."
[74] Amm., 24.7, 31.13.
[75] Noel Lenski, "*Initium mali Romano imperio:* Contemporary Reactions to the Battle of Adrianople," in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 127 (1997):146-149. Cf. Lib. *Or.* 2.37-40, 2.45, 24.
[76] e.g. Ambr., *De fide* 1.138, "Gog iste Gothus est, quem iam videmus exisse."
[77] Aug., *De civitate Dei* 1.1, "potius deberent, si quid recti saperent, illa, quae ab hostibus aspera et dura perpessi sunt, illi prouidentiae diuinae tribuere, quae solet corruptos hominum mores bellis emendare atque conterere itemque uitam mortalium iustam atque laudabilem talibus adflictionibus exercere probatamque uel in meliora transferre uel in his adhuc terris propter usus alios detinere." Cf. 1.7, 1.31-33.
[78] Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, 16-26. Rene Brouwer, "Polybius and Stoic *Tyche*," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 51 (2011).

observable.[79] Other sources are less sweeping in their claims about *fortuna*. In his *De re publica*, Cicero denies that Rome acquired her empire by chance (*non fortuito*), but he also claims that the Roman state succeeded "with fortune not opposing."[80] The sense of this ablative absolute is vague, but its inclusion is less forceful than an outright denial that fortune had any role to play at all.

Vegetius, however, includes very few references to *fortuna* within his work. In most cases, it is used in the generic sense of "the way in which events fall out," "hazards," "opportunity," or "a favorable outcome."[81] It is also used to describe property.[82] Even when Vegetius seems to appeal to the personified agency of chance, it is used to contrast the uncertainties of battle with the avoidability of ambushes:

> He who is beaten in open battle, although, even there, skill is very helpful, can nevertheless blame fortune (*fortunam*) in his own defense, but he who has suffered a sudden attack, ambushes, or traps, cannot excuse himself from blame, because it was possible to avoid them and anticipate them through proper scouting.[83]

Only at 4.26.6, in an allusion to the sack of Rome in 390 BC, does Vegetius concede that *fortuna* may have aided Rome in the course of her history, but even here he is cautious.

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[79] McGing, *Polybius' Histories*, 195-201.

[80] Cic., *Rep.* 2.30, "intellegesque non fortuito populum Romanum sed consilio et disciplina confirmatum esse, nec tamen adversante fortuna." James E.G. Zetzel, ed., *Cicero: De Re Publica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 186, sees the comment as a veiled critique of Polybius' emphasis on *τύχη*.

[81] *OLD* s.v. *fortuna,* 5, 6, and 7. Veg., *Epit.* 1.7.5, "Iuventus enim cui defensio provinciarum, cui bellorum est committenda fortuna," 3.25.5, "Quod si aliquot casu omnis in acie fundatur exercitus, perniciosa clades; tamen reparationis multis fortuna non defuit," 4.45.3, "fortunae beneficiis iungendae sunt manus et ex oportunitate proelium conserendum."

[82] Veg., *Epit.* 3.10.4, "possessorum fortunae."

[83] Ibid., 3.22.13, "Qui in acie publica vincitur pugna, licet et ibi ars plurimum prosit, tamen ad defensionem suam potest accusare fortunam; qui vero superventum insidias subsessas passus est, culpam suam non potest excusare, quia haec evitare potuit et per speculatores idoneos ante cognoscere." Milner, *Vegetius*, 109, capitalizes Fortuna in his translation. Cf. also Veg., *Epit.* 3.26.4, "Aut inopia aut superventibus aut terrore melius est hostem domare quam proelio, in quo amplius solet fortuna potestatis habere quam virtus."

He leaves it unclear whether geese saved the Capitoline "due to watchfulness or *fortuna*."[84]

Vegetius' Christianity may offer some explanation for this disregard for *fortuna*. Like many of his contemporaries, Vegetius sought to secularize much of Roman history. Ambrose, for instance, in his letter arguing against returning the Altar of Victory to the *curia*, argues that Rome owed her success to legions, not the gods:

> So they believe that Victory is a goddess, which is certainly a gift, not a power: victory is granted – it does not rule – by the help of legions (*legionum gratia*), not by the power of religious rites (*religionum potentia*). Is she a great goddess whom the number of soldiers claims for themselves or the outcome of battles grants?[85]

This interpretation of Roman history is constructed by Ambrose to counter Symmachus' claim that the observance of Rome's religious rites was an important part of ensuring divine favor. Ambrose, citing historical examples, contends that Rome became great through military discipline and valor.[86] This view of the past fits with the almost invisible role of fortune in Vegetius.

Walter Goffart has asserted that this attitude eliminates any notion of "imperial destiny" from the *Epitoma*.[87] Still, Vegetius' emphasis on Roman discipline and structure assumes a certain amount of exceptionalism. It may not be couched in terms of divine intervention, but his relentless praise of the ancients and their institutions elevates the *mos maiorum* of pagan Rome.

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[84] Ibid., 4.26.6, "Mira diligentia siue fortuna uiros, qui uniuersum orbem erant missuri sub iugum, auis una seruauit." Here, *sive* introduces an alternative "in case the preceding should not be thought suitable, proper, etc.," *OLD* s.v. *sive*, 9a. Ambr., *Ep.* 18.5, cites the example of the honking goose to mock the notion that the gods watched over the city of Rome.

[85] Ambr., *Ep*. 18.30, "Sic deam esse et victoriam crediderunt, quae utique munus est, non potestas: donatur, non dominatur, legionum gratia, non religionum potentia. Magna igitur dea, quam militum multitudo sibi vindicat, vel praeliorum donat eventus?"

[86] Ibid., 18.7, "Non in fibris pecudum, sed in viribus bellatorum tropaea victoriae sunt. Aliis ego (Roma) disciplinis orbem subegi."

[87] Walter Goffart, "The Date and Purpose of Vegetius' 'De Re Militari,'" 93.

Although Vegetius' emphasis on secular institutions fits with some arguments made by Christians, it also conflicts with the attitude of many bishops who thought that orthodox religion was an important bulwark against foreign invaders.[88] Vegetius betrays no such belief. He only mentions God a few times, and then it is usually in connection with the emperor. In this respect, Vegetius' secular historiography is much more thorough than Ambrose's. Ambrose praises Rome's *institutiones* as ammunition against Symmachus, but still argues that Christianity is important for the health of the empire. Vegetius, on the other hand, unflinchingly applies his "secular historiography" to the present.

The Importance of the Handbook

Vegetius' expressed belief in the primacy of institutions makes it easier for him to contend that handbooks are indispensable tools for the administration of the state. If discipline, training, and sound doctrine lead to victory, rather than innate ability, wily stratagems, or divine aid, then a text aimed at reform becomes more meaningful.

The conviction that historical and didactic literature could be used for practical ends had long been expressed in ancient literature. Thucydides writes that his work will be one for all time, and that its insights into human nature will help men in the future predict, and presumably preempt, disasters.[89] Polybius believes that his histories will be of practical use, both to instruct the statesman in good policy and to provide moral instruction by demonstrating the vicissitudes of fortune:

> The knowledge of history is a very trustworthy education and training for political affairs, and the most excellent – even the only – teacher of being

[88] Milner, *Vegetius,* xxxvi. Ambr. *De obitu Theod.* 7, *De fide* 2.136-140, *Ep.* 17.1. Maximus of Turin, *Sermo* 69.1-2, 83.1, 85.2.
[89] Thuc., 1.22.

> able to bear the changes of fortune nobly is the recollection of the misfortunes of others.[90]

Roman authors also trusted in the benefit of historical writing. Sallust, following the conventional comparison between word and action, tries to equate the doing and writing of great deeds.[91] This sentiment is repeated by Pliny in a letter to Tacitus.[92]

Vegetius, however, takes Sallust's dictum even further:

> Cato the Elder, although he was unbeaten in war and had often led armies as consul, he believed that he would be more useful to the republic if he were to put down military discipline into writing. For deeds which are done bravely are of one age, but those things which are written for the benefit of the state last forever.[93]

The notion that handbooks would prove useful is of course a literary *topos*, but the forcefulness with which Vegetius expresses it is unique. This may be reminiscent of passages in Cicero's *De officiis* where he emphasizes the immortal service which great men render upon the state through their written works.[94] Cicero explicitly compares Themistocles to Solon, concluding that the latter accomplished more than the former on account of the fact that "Salamis benefited the state only once, but Solon's laws will always benefit her."[95] By taking the same tack, Vegetius nearly elevates the handbook – even an epitome of handbooks – to the same level as laws which continue to serve the state for centuries.

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[90] Plb., 1.1.2, "ἀληθινωτάτην μὲν εἶναι παιδείαν καὶ γυμνασίαν πρὸς τὰς πολιτικὰς πράξεις τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας μάθησιν, ἐναργεστάτην δὲ καὶ μόνην διδάσκαλον τοῦ δύνασθαι τὰς τῆς τύχης μεταβολὰς γενναίως ὑποφέρειν τὴν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων περιπετειῶν ὑπόμνησιν," Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, 6-7, 39.
[91] Sall. *Cat.* 3.1, "Et qui fecere et qui facta aliorum scripsere, multi laudantur."
[92] Plin., *Ep.* 16.3.
[93] Veg., *Epit.* 2.3.6-7, "Cato ille Maior, cum et armis invictus esset et consul exercitus saepe duxisset, plus se rei publicae credidit profuturum, si disciplinam militarem conferret in litteras. Nam unius aetatis sunt quae fortiter fiunt; quae vero pro utilitate rei publicae scribuntur aeterna sunt."
[94] Cic., *Off.*, 1.156, "Neque solum vivi atque praesentes studiosos discendi erudiunt atque docent, sed hoc idem etiam post mortem monumentis litterarum assequuntur."
[95] Ibid., 1.75, "illud enim semel profuit, hoc semper proderit civitati."

Still, there is an important distinction here. Cicero and Sallust emphasize the immortality to be achieved by the author of great deeds. The text is a vestige, a *monumentum*, of a great man, and it allows the writer to live on. For Vegetius, however, it is the handbook – written for the benefit of the state – which becomes immortal. This shift in perspective from writer to text is a characteristic feature of late-antique thought. In religious and legal contexts, codified texts became elevated above the very men who had written them. Vegetius situates military handbooks within this same framework, and writes glowingly of the historical longevity of military literature.[96] Moreover, he contends that military science is the indispensable art "without which all other arts are not able to exist."[97]

Panegyric and Handbooks

It should be no surprise that Vegetius takes pains to stress the value of handbooks; after all, he himself is writing one. Nevertheless, Vegetius' institutionalized view of history and his praise of practical literature are more than simply self-serving. They enable him to maneuver around the problem of addressing a didactic work to an emperor. If training and discipline alone make Rome strong, Vegetius can dodge the question of the Emperor's competence and make a straightforward appeal for reform. Vegetius' historical perspective and his belief in the handbook's utility allow him to frame his recommendations, in many ways a radical departure from present policies, as a conservative and safe return to Rome's glorious past.

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[96] Veg., *Epit.* 3.praef.

[97] Veg., *Epit.* 3.praef.3, "O uiros summa admiratione laudandos, qui eam praecipue artem ediscere uoluerunt, sine qua aliae artes esse non possunt!" Cf. 3.10.2, "Quis autem dubitet artem bellicam rebus omnibus esse potiorem, per quam libertas retinetur et dignitas, propagantur provinciae, conservatur imperium." This sentiment was first expressed by Plato, *Leg.* 635e-626b, and was also quoted in Ael., *Tact.* 1.7.

There is a lot of concern in modern scholarship over how Vegetius could write a book of advice without implying that the emperor's military abilities were deficient. This question has been frequently raised to argue for or against dating the *Epitoma* to the reign of a particular emperor. Michael Charles, for instance, identifies the tone of the epilogue (3.26.35-38), a passage praising the skill and athleticism of the *princeps*, as "one of somewhat ill-disguised condescension," and adds that "such a tone would hardly have been suitable for addressing an experienced general and military commander such as Theodosius I."[98] Timothy Barnes contends that the title *domitor omnium gentium barbararum* would not have been appropriate for a general like Valentinian III with no military experience.[99]

All these statements assume that addressing works to emperors was a dangerous task, and that the emperor's titulature had to correspond to historical circumstances. Yet writers could easily write works for the imperial court provided they rehearse the conventional claims of modesty and praise of the emperor in the preface. There was already a long established tradition of dedicating works to the *princeps*, "common practice in ancient times."[100] Vitruvius addressed his work on architecture to Augustus, Aelian dedicated his treatise to Trajan, and Polyaenus wrote his *Strategica* for Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.[101] We do not know the name of the emperor to whom the *Epitoma* was addressed, but like his literary predecessors, Vegetius is quite circumspect

[98] Charles, *Vegetius in Context*, 102. Charles forgets that praising athleticism was a common feature of panegyric, even for older and more accomplished emperors, cf. Amm. 21.6.7.
[99] T. D. Barnes, "The Date of Vegetius," *Phoenix* 33.3 (Autumn, 1979): 255. See Charles, *Vegetius in Context*, 114-117 for counterarguments.
[100] Veg., *Epit.* praef.1, "antiquis temporibus mos fuit."
[101] Vitr., 1.praef.1, Ael., *Tact.* praef., Polyaen., *Strat.* 1.praef.

in how he frames the treatise. The emperor does not need the text. Instead, Vegetius – in almost a Platonic sense – is telling the emperor what he already knows:

> Therefore, I attempt to exhibit the ancient custom of selecting and training recruits through certain steps and chapters, not because those things seem to be unknown to you, Invincible Emperor, but so that you may recognize that those things, which you are arranging on your own volition for the health of the state, the founders of the Roman empire long ago observed and so that you may find in this pamphlet whatever you think must be sought out about the greatest affairs.[102]

If institutions are what make Rome strong, and handbooks can bring about positive reform, the Emperor need not be offended by specific proposals. By removing indwelling excellence, strategic acumen, or divine favor from the equation, Vegetius can make a sterner appeal for the need for reform.

History and *Disciplina*

It cannot be reiterated enough that Vegetius was not a historian; he was working in the tradition of military handbooks which dated back to antiquity. The historical perspective of Vegetius, however, is of the utmost importance. Indeed, the first words of the treatise, *antiquis temporibus*, set the tone for the entire work. Although Vegetius presents his *Epitoma* as merely an account of Rome's institutions, the way he frames Roman success implicitly calls the emperor to emulate Vegetius' model. Vegetius proposes a rigorous reform of the military apparatus centered on small, highly-trained, efficient, and homogeneous legions.

Still, the implications of these reforms were not limited to the military sphere. In the context of fourth and fifth-century bureaucracy, the call for a return to *disciplina*

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[102] Veg., *Epit.* praef.5-6, "De dilectu igitur atque exercitatione tironum per quosdam gradus et titulos antiquam consuetudinem conamur ostendere, non quo tibi, imperator invicte, ista videantur incognita, sed ut quae sponte pro rei publicae salute disponis agnoscas olim custodisse Romani imperii conditores et in hoc parvo libello quicquid de maximis rebus semperque necessariis requirendum credis invenias."

would surely have had echoes for the civil establishment. Vegetius himself was probably not a military man, and his *Epitoma* was perhaps tied to an understanding of how the civil bureaucracy ought to function. For Vegetius, Romans are made, not born, and the importance of good instruction supersedes the walls of the barracks. All officials must be familiar with the models of Rome's past if they are to be effective stewards of empire.

A belief in the efficacy of his historical template also meant that Vegetius could transform his program into *praecepta*. If success were contingent upon nature, genius, or divine favor, a list of rules could hardly do justice to the difficulty of commanding, since so many factors lie outside of the control of the general. *Disciplina*, however, was very much under the direction of the commander. Regulations could be taught and applied; standards of training could be implemented. All that was needed was a writer to promulgate the principles by which Rome had gone forth and conquered the world. Vegetius' historical perspective set him up to produce an aphoristic list of rules, a distillation of his most important prescriptions.

CHAPTER 2

THE *REGULAE BELLORUM GENERALES*

Book 3 of Vegetius' *Epitoma rei militaris* concludes with a list of rules entitled the "*regulae bellorum generales*." The *regulae* restate and summarize Vegetius' most important arguments in the first three books with an emphasis on the prime importance of training and discipline as well as the need to avoid direct confrontation where possible. The authenticity of these *regulae* has been questioned by some modern scholars. In several ways, the rules seem disjointed from the rest of the work. The first *regula* also appears in Greek in the *Codex Laurentianus*, a 10th century Byzantine manuscript of military authors, suggesting that the rules could be excerpts taken from another source. Scholars who argue for this interpolation say that rule-making is uncharacteristic of Vegetius. A paucity of internal evidence to the rules makes a determination of the provenance of 3.26.1-33 difficult, but a consideration of other technical military treatises suggests that a summarizing list is not as uncharacteristic of the genre as some assume. It is a mistake to assign the *regulae* immediately to an interpolator. Vegetius' rules are an integral part of the work that reflect a practical intent behind the treatise, an attempt to present the epitome as a coherent program of reform and a guidebook for the general. At the same time, the summation of *scientia rei militaris* in a few short principles adds to Vegetius' authorial influence. It demonstrates that he, as a writer, has uncovered the essence of his craft and is now passing on his knowledge to the reader.[103]

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[103] Vegetius sees this task as one of the most honorable services to the state, Veg., *Epit.* 2.3.7, "unius aetatis sunt quae fortiter fiunt, quae vero pro utilitate rei publicae scribuntur aeterna sunt."

The Manuscript Evidence

The *regulae* are present in each manuscript family.[104] The ε hyparchtype includes a subscription by an otherwise unknown Flavius Eutropius at the end of book 4:

> FLS. EUTROPIUS EMENDAVI SINE EXEMPLARIO CONSTANTINOPOLIM CONSULS VALENTIANO AUGUST. VIJ ET ABIENI[105]

This gives a *terminus ante quem* of AD 450 for not only the work as a whole, but also the *regulae bellorum generales*. Since the ε hyparchtype is thought to be a descendant of Eutropius' recension and since δ, β, and φ all attest to the *regulae*, 3.26.1-33 could at the latest have been an addition by Eutropius.[106] Everett Wheeler suggests that Eutropius omitted the name of the dedicatee and inserted the *regulae*,[107] but this must remain speculation. M.D. Reeve thinks it unlikely that all the manuscripts stem from Eutropius' recension. Barring new evidence, it is not possible to know what changes, if any, Eutropius made to the text.[108] Comparison with other recensions in antiquity suggests that, although ancient *emendatio* did not measure up to modern editorial standards, the interpolation of summarizing lists was not a common feature of the practice.[109]

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[104] M.D. Reeve, ed., *Vegetius: Epitoma rei militaris* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 116-120. Alf Önnerfors, ed., *P. Flavii Vegeti Renati Epitoma Rei Militaris* (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1995), 187-192.

[105] M.D. Reeve, "The Transmission of Vegetius's '*Epitoma rei militaris*,'" *Aevum* 74.1 (Jan.-Apr., 2000): 246. M manuscript. Other variants have minor differences. See Önnerfors, *Epitoma Rei Militaris*, 260-261.

[106] Reeve, *Vegetius*, xviii-xix. Simple confusions of spelling consistent throughout the ε family suggest that the hyparchtype post-dates Eutropius' 5th century recension.

[107] Everett L. Wheeler, Review of *The De Re Militari of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages*, by Christopher Allmand, *Reviews in History*, Review no. 1293, http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1293.

[108] Reeve, *Vegetius*, xvii.

[109] Emendation was a popular personal activity of leisure and study in the fourth and fifth centuries, but notes tended to be limited to haphazard marginalia, cf. J.E.G. Zetzel, "The Subscriptions in the Manuscripts of Livy and Fronto and the meaning of *Emendatio*," *Classical Philology* 75.1 (January, 1980): 38-59. This emendation should not be seen as a purely pagan activity or as serious scholarship, Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 421-497. A sizable market for forged manuscripts was especially vibrant in the second century, but these forgeries tended to present alternate readings of antiquarian and grammatical interest and not summarizing lists, Cf. J.E.G Zetzel, "Emendavi ad Tironem: Some Notes on Scholarship in the Second Century A.D.," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 77 (1973): 225-243.

Since the nineteenth century, scholars have questioned the authenticity of the *regulae bellorum generales.* In both of his editions of the *Epitoma rei militaris,* Carl Lang bracketed 3.26.1-33. The reasoning provided in his *apparatus criticus* is as follows:

> There is extraordinary agreement of this first particular rule of the *regulae generales* with the beginning of a brief excerpt from folio 131 of the famous tenth-century compendium of Greek military writers, the *Codex Laurentianus*. Above it is the title "The following sayings taken from other books," and it begins with these words, "Such is the finding of the man happening to be in times of war. Something profitable to you is harmful to the enemy, and what is helpful to the enemy, the enemy wishes it to be set against your forces. Accordingly, it never helps us to act or not to act according to the consideration of the enemy, but rather it is beneficial to do only the very thing which we esteem to be useful for our own forces. For if you imitate those things which the enemy does for himself, you harm yourself, and, likewise, the opposite. If you do something beneficial to yourself, this will harm the enemy since he wishes to imitate your plans." The rules which follow differ very much from our *regulae*.[110]

Grammatically, there are some important differences between this passage and the opening of 3.26, but Lang was right to point out *mirus consensus* between the two. Yet he does not attempt to argue whether they derive from a common source or whether the Greek translates Vegetius. Evidently, Lang believed that Vegetius' *regulae* were an interpolated list from another source, part of which eventually found its way into the *Codex Laurentianus' γνωμικά.*

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[110] Carl Lang, ed., *Flavi Vegeti Renati Epitoma rei militaris* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1885), 120-121. "Mirus est consensus huius primae regularum generalium particulae cum initio brevis excerpti, quod codex ille celeberrimus scriptorium militarium Graecorum Laurentianus X saeculi folio 131 continet et cui inscriptio est 'Τὰ εἰς ὕστερον ἐκβληθέντα ἀπὸ ἄλλων βιβλίων γνωμικά'. Incipit autem ab his verbis 'Τοιαύτη τίς ἐστιν ἐν τοῖς τῶν πολέμων καιροῖς ἡ τοῦ συμφέροντος εὕρεσις. Τὸ σοὶ συμφέρον τοῖς πολεμίοις ἐστὶν ἀσύμφορον · καὶ ὃ παρ'ἐκείνοις ὠφέλιμον, τοῦτο τοῖς σοῖς ἐναντιοῦσθαι φιλεῖ · οὐδὲν τοίνυν κατὰ τὴν ἐκείνων γνώμην ἢ ποιεῖν ἡμετέροις χρήσιμον εἶναι νομίζομεν · εἰ γὰρ, ἅπερ ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ πράττει, ταῦτα σὺ μιμήσῃ, σαυτὸν ἀδικεῖς, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ ἀνάπαλιν [·] εἴ τι σὺ πράττεις συμφέρον σαυτῷ, τοῦτο βλάψει τὸν πολέμιον τὰ σὰ μιμεῖσθαι βουλόμενον.' Quae secuntur a nostris regulis prorsus discrepant."

Dankfrid Schenk is more explicit in his criticism of the *regulae*. He points to four particular rules which do not correspond to any other section of the *Epitoma*. This, he contends, shows that neither Vegetius nor an interpolator created 3.26.1-33.[111] Instead, Schenk argues that Vegetius drew from Frontinus' no longer extant *De re militari* and clumsily inserted the same list, including the rules summarizing sections which do not appear elsewhere in Vegetius.[112] This hypothesis may seem attractive, but it is founded on the assumption that Vegetius was willing to copy irrelevant rules from another source but could not devise them for himself. Schenk also assumes that an interpolator could not write rules with no relationship to the rest of the work. Moreover, he supposes that Vegetius drew from principally one source for each book. Today, scholars take a more cautious approach to Vegetius than Schenk's often rigid *Quellenforschung*,[113] but the problem he identifies and the hypothesis he proposes still must be considered when we examine Vegetius' *regulae*.

More doubt is cast on Vegetius' *regulae* due to a lack of references to the passage within the *Epitoma*. The heading, "REGULAE BELLORUM GENERALES," if authentic, is the only indication that a list of rules is coming.[114] In all but one of the earliest manuscripts, the *regulae* are listed one after another with no spacing or

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[111] Dankfrid Schenk, *Flavius Vegetius Renatus: Die Quellen der Epitoma rei militaris* (Aalen: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1963), 58-59. "Nun sind aber vier Regeln darunter, die keinerlei Zusammenhang mit dem übrigen Buch haben: [3.26.7, 27, 28, 30]. Diese Tatsache beweist, daß die vorliegende Sammlung weder von Vegetius noch von einem Interpolator gemacht ist."
[112] Ibid., 59.
[113] N.P. Milner, ed., trans., *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), xvi-xvii. Cf. Maria Pretzler, "Polyainos the Historian? Stratagems and the Use of the Past in the Second Sophistic," in *Polyainos: Neue Studien*, Kai Brodersen, ed. (Berlin: Verlag Antike, 2010), 92 for a discussion of the flaws in traditional *Quellenforschung*.
[114] Reeve, "The Transmission of Vegetius's '*Epitoma rei militaris*,'" 277.

indentation,[115] an arrangement which might be jarring to a reader, especially due to the lack of connective particles between the rules. Reeve states that this is the strongest argument in favor of the interpolation of 3.26.1-33.[116] In addition to these formatting questions, some of the *regulae* bear no connection to the rest of the work, as pointed out by Schenk. The confusion surrounding 3.26 has caused a number of scholars to attribute Vegetius' rules to an interpolator's pen.

However appealing this solution, we should exercise caution, especially since the manuscript tradition is unanimous. Editorial decisions such as Lang's are attractive, but founded in large part on subjective considerations. In its worst form, conjectural emendation consists of a rejection of a particular reading simply because it does not accord well with the editor's own literary sensibilities or assumptions. One scholar has gone so far as to say that "all textual decisions have an aesthetic basis or are built on an aesthetic assumption."[117] Lang is no exception, and at times he goes astray. For instance, he bracketed 3.16.7 since he deemed it repetitive and unnecessary,[118] but Andreas Andersson cites several passages in which Vegetius repeats himself "with the same or slightly changed words in order to drive his point home."[119] The burden of proof should rest on the critic to show that a particular passage is uncharacteristic of the work and genre, especially where the manuscript testimony is unanimous.

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[115] Ibid. Cf. Reeve, *Vegetius*, xxx. Z writes out each *regula* on a separate line. A manuscript of uncertain age, it was acquired by the Vatican in 1623.
[116] Reeve, *Vegetius*, xxxviii.
[117] James Thorpe, *Principles of Textual Criticism* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1972), 7.
[118] Lang, *Epitoma rei militaris*, 110.
[119] Andreas Andersson, *Studia Vegetiana* (Upsala: Almquist & Wiksell Soc., 1938), 23. "Sed haud raro apud hunc scriptorem eadem res brevi intervallo iisdem vel paulum mutatis verbis inculcandi causa repetitur, velut in his exemplis, quae cum loco in dubitationem vocato in primis comparanda censeo."

This does not mean that we must blindly accept the *regulae* until presented with absolute evidence. Conservative emendation can be even more problematic. An inherent logical flaw exists in defending every possible manuscript tradition, for after all, errors have inevitably occurred in transmission, and at most only one inherited reading can be correct.[120] Even when the manuscripts all agree, a serious danger exists that an erroneous reading will propagate invalid assumptions regarding ancient lexical, grammatical, and literary practices.[121] In the words of Kenneth Sisam, "intensive study with a strong bias towards the manuscript reading blunts the sense of style, and works in a vicious circle of debasement."[122]

On balance, we must not blindly commit to the manuscript testimony, nor should we boldly assume that the *regulae* could not have been written by Vegetius. Conjecture must "suit the context, the author's style and vocabulary, and any general laws which have been proved to apply to his works."[123] Unfortunately, all we can know about Vegetius comes from his only two extant works, the *Epitoma rei militaris* and his *Mulomedicina*.[124] Nevertheless, in addition to an analysis of internal evidence, a consideration of other similar works from antiquity should give us a better sense of what the genre of military handbooks permitted regarding rule and list making. After all, generic conventions were of prime importance to Roman writers, even writers of more

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[120] James Alfred Willis, *Latin Textual Criticism* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 9-11.
[121] George Kane, "Conjectural Emendation," in *Medieval Manuscripts and Textual Criticism,* ed. Christopher Kleinhenz (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 1976), 218.
[122] Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 39. Cf. Paul Maas, *Textkritik* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1950), 13, "Natürlich ist es viel schädlicher, wenn eine Verderbnis unerkannt bleibt, als wen nein heiler Text zu Unrecht angegriffen wird…die nicht bezeichnete Verderbnis schädigt den stilistischen Gesamteindruck."
[123] F.W. Hall, *A Companion to Classical Texts* (Hildesheim: Georg Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968), 151.
[124] On stylistic grounds, it has been well established that Vegetius was the author of both texts. C. Schöner, *Studien zu Vegetius* (Erlangen: Druck der Universitäts – Buchdruckerei von Junge & Sohn., 1888), 18ff.

technical works.[125] Vegetius himself begins his *Epitoma* by acknowledging his predecessors.[126] If we are to understand the *regulae,* we must consider both their internal relevance to the rest of the *Epitoma* and their wider significance as part of didactic military literature.

The Internal Evidence

Although scant references to the *regulae* lie within the transmitted text, it is worth considering the relationship of 3.26.1-33 to the rest of the work. As mentioned above, the only road-sign indicating a list of rules is the heading "*regulae bellorum generales*." In fact, this confusion may have led the ε family of manuscripts to mistake the text at 3.26.2 for a title.[127] There is a debate over whether any of the tables and headings in Vegetius are authentic or whether they are the result of later marginalia.[128] On the topic, Vegetius himself writes, "I attempt to present ancient practice regarding the recruitment and training of soldiers in certain steps and *tituli.*"[129] Some translators take *tituli* here to mean "titles" or "headings."[130] Milner writes that Vegetius' use of *tituli* "indicates that the rubrics are the author's; their style is homogeneous with the text, and they share in the

[125] Cf. Quint., *Inst.* 10.2.22. Philip A. Stadter, "The Ars Tactica of Arrian: Tradition and Originality," *Classical Philology* 73.2 (Apr., 1978): 117. Arrian and Aelian each show an awareness of their debt to their predecessors and largely follow their examples.
[126] Veg., *Epit.* praef. 1. "Antiquis temporibus mos fuit bonarum atrium studia mandare litteris atque in libros redacta offerre principibus."
[127] Ibid., 3.26.2, "In bello qui plus in agrariis vigilaverit, plus in exercendo milite laboraverit, minus periculum sustinebit." Reeve, "The Transmission of Vegetius's '*Epitoma rei militaris,*'" 276.
[128] Reeve, "The Transmission of Vegetius's '*Epitoma rei militaris,*'" 276-277.
[129] Veg., *Epit.* 1.1.5, "De dilectu igitur atque exercitatione tironum per quosdam gradus et titulos antiquam consuetudinem conamur ostendere."
[130] Milner, *Vegetius*, 2, "by a number of stages and headings"; Friedhelm L. Müller, ed., trans., *Vegetius, Abriß des Militärwesens* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997), 31, "über verschiedene Stufen und Titel." Leo F. Stelten, ed., trans., *Flavius Vegetius Renatus: Epitoma Rei Militaris* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 9 erroneously translates *tituli* as "ranks," an unattested meaning of the word. John Clarke, trans., *The Military Institutions of the Romans (De Re Militari),* ed. Thomas R. Phillips (Mansfield Centre, Connecticut: Martino Publishing, 2011) completely avoids translating *tituli* and instead translates the whole phrase, *per quosdam gradus et titulos*, "in some order."

same systems of *variatio*."[131] Andersson, through an analysis of both of Vegetius' extant works, argues that the language and syntax of the *tituli* is consistent with Vegetius' general style.[132]

Nevertheless, Lang argues that the word *tituli* refers to sections of the work and not the headings in and of themselves, an attested use of the word.[133] Reeve adds that Vegetius often links across from section to section using connective particles, e.g. "*sed/vero/autem/tamen, ergo/igitur, quoque/etiam/praeterea*," making headings superfluous.[134] But this does not prove that headings were not included, and Reeve ultimately can only state that "the answer…remains *non liquet*."[135]

The use of the word *generalis* in the heading is seen by Everett Wheeler as problematic.[136] Indeed, this is the word's only appearance in the *Epitoma rei militaris.* Still, the occurrence of a *hapax legomenon* should not be taken too seriously, especially in a work as brief as Vegetius'.[137] The choice of the word *regula* to describe Vegetius' rules is also interesting. Besides the heading at 3.26, the word only occurs twice in the *Epitoma*, at 3.10.20 and 3.26.38. Wheeler argues that the mention of "*regula proeliandi*" in Vegetius' conclusion of book 3 "may have suggested insertion of the *regulae* at 3.26.1-

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[131] Milner, *Vegetius*, 2, n. 2.
[132] Andersson, *Studia Vegetiana*, 44-47.
[133] *OLD* s.v. *titulus*, 3b. Lang, *Epitoma rei militaris*, xv. Reeve, "The Transmission of Vegetius's '*Epitoma rei militaris*,'" 276.
[134] Reeve, *Vegetius*, xxxvii.
[135] ibid., xxxviii.
[136] Everett L. Wheeler, Review of *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, by N. P. Milner, *The Journal of Military History* 58.1 (Jan., 1994): 138.
[137] The *TLL* cites the use of the adjective *generalis* by Vegetius' contemporaries in historiographic (e.g. Amm., 14.11.25, 28.5.14), ecclesiastical (e.g. Leo Magnus, *sermo* 38.3), legal (e.g. *Cod. Theod.* 1.1.4, 10.3.7), and philosophical (e.g. Aug. *civ.* 4.20, Macr. *somn.* 1.3.11) contexts. Handbooks from other periods use the adjective, cf. Cels., 5.28.11 uses and Var., *R.* 2.1.12, "una quaeque [scientia] in se generalis partis habet minimum novenas." Palladius, roughly a contemporary of Vegetius, links *generalis* with synonyms of *regula*, cf. Pallad., *de Agric.* 1.42.4, "Expletis his, quae pertinent ad generale praeceptum, nunc operas suas singulis mensibus explicabimus et a mense Ianuario faciemus initium." Seneca also writes of *generalia praecepta* (*Ep*. 94.32).

32" by an interpolator.[138] But this argument can cut both ways. Could not Vegetius' emphatic reference to a "Rule-book of Battle"[139] be meant to tie in an otherwise unconnected section of the work? Immediately following the *regulae*, Vegetius declines to comment on cavalry, instead writing that past writers have provided *multa praecepta* on the subject.[140] *Praecepta* has a broad range of meanings, but could it not also allude to the *regulae* immediately above?[141] It is worth noting that Lang did not bracket 3.26.34. If we are to excise 3.26.1-33, but not 34, there would be a rather abrupt transition from Vegetius' discussion of retreats (3.25) to his mentioning of *praecepta de equitatu*. Although the *regulae* may seem unappealing to the modern aesthetic, the alternative leaves the reader with a throwaway line on the principles of horsemanship.

One of the more troubling critiques of Vegetius' *regulae* is Schenk's assertion that four of the rules have no corresponding section of the work.[142] But Schenk wrongly cites 3.26.7 and 30. The former – "in attracting and taking in the enemy, if they come in good faith, there is great trust, since deserters harm the enemy more than if they were killed"[143] – restates a point made at 3.6.33. The latter – "in camp, fear and punishments correct soldiers; on the march, hope and rewards make them better"[144] – summarizes a longer discussion on discipline at 3.4.3-6.

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[138] Wheeler, review of *The De Re Militari of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages*, by Allmand.
[139] Milner's translation of *regula proeliandi*, Milner, *Vegetius*, 111.
[140] Veg., *Epit.* 3.26.34.
[141] Cf. OLD s.v. *praeceptum*, esp. 3, "A principle, rule." s.v. *regula*, 2, "A basic principle, rule, standard, or sim."
[142] Schenk, *Die Quellen der Epitoma rei militaris*, 58. The modern edition numbers are 3.26.7, 27, 28, 30.
[143] Veg., *Epit.* 3.26.7, "In sollicitandis suscipiendisque hostibus, si cum fide veniant, magna fiducia est, quia adversarium amplius frangunt transfugae quam perempti."
[144] Ibid., 3.26.30, "Milites timor et poena in sedibus corrigit, in expeditione spes ac praemia faciunt meliores."

Schenk's other two examples are also not very convincing in supporting the argument that the *regulae* do not derive from Vegetius. 3.26.27 calls for the general to send all of his soldiers into their tents in order to apprehend enemy scouts, and 3.26.28 encourages the general to change his plans when they are found out. Although these *regulae* have no corresponding passages in the rest of the work, they are consistent with some of the *Epitoma rei militaris*' recurring themes. Vegetius emphasizes the need for the general to keep his plans secret. A general is his own undoing if his plans are discovered, so Vegetius advises the commander to keep his next move secret, even from his own men.[145] It is only a short logical leap to say that "when you discover that your plan has been betrayed to the enemy, you should change your strategy."[146] The strategem described at 3.26.27 – sending all soldiers to their tents in order to catch enemy spies in the open – is unusual, but it has a slight echo in Vegetius' prescribed remedy for enemy ambushes.[147] Moreover, the maxim that what helps the general harms the enemy and its corollary would suggest the need for the general to seek to apprehend enemy *exploratores* as assiduously as he directs his own.[148] It is perhaps an invalid assumption to think that every single *regula* should have a directly correlated passage in the rest of the work. Some, such as 3.26.1, 2, 10, 12, and 13, are sufficiently aphoristic to refer not just to specific sections but to recurring themes throughout the whole work.

List-Making in a Roman Context

Internal evidence does not provide a very clear idea of the role of the *regulae* in Vegetius' work. Although they restate many specifics and summarize general themes,

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[145] Ibid., 3.6.8-12.
[146] Ibid., 3.26.28, "cum consilium tuum cognoveris adversariis proditum, dispositionem mutare te convenit."
[147] Ibid., 3.6.25-28.
[148] cf. Ibid., 3.26.1 and 3.6.

questions of presentation leave many unsure how they could have been situated in the *Epitoma*. If we turn our attention to similar literary works, we can begin to see the ways in which Vegetius' *regulae* accord with and differ from generic norms. None of this analysis can prove what Vegetius wrote or did not write, but, through comparisons with other works and traditions, I will provide a better understanding of the literary context in which Vegetius may have produced his *regulae bellorum generales*.

In antiquity, list-making found its most prolific and practical uses in administrative and economic documents. Some of the earliest extant instances of writing come from simple catalogues of stored goods. The Romans used lists to record laws,[149] legal remedies,[150] taxes,[151] prices,[152] and the distribution of military forces.[153] Itineraries and other directional documents, explicitly mentioned by Vegetius as necessary for a good general, were closer to lists than cartographical diagrams.[154] From the early principate, these sorts of documents were recorded on codices for ease of reference. Over time, public administrative lists also became an important means of commemorating offices and accomplishments.[155]

Literarily, lists give an opportunity to categorize knowledge and confer upon the author an authority stemming from the conceit of expertise. In a way, a list's simple and

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[149] e.g. *XII Tabulae* and later the Justinian and Theodosian Codes.
[150] e.g. The Praetorian Edict.
[151] e.g. the Tax Law of Palmyra (*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* II 3913), in Matthews, J. F. "The Tax Law of Palmyra: Evidence for Economic History in a City of the Roman East." *Journal of Roman Studies* 74 (1984): 157-80.
[152] e.g. Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices. Cf. William Martin Leake, *An Edict of Diocletian Fixing a Maximum of Prices throughout the Roman Empire* (London: John Murray, 1826). Other similar edicts, such as that issued by Julian at Antioch, may have followed a similar list format, cf. Ammianus, 22.14.1.
[153] e.g. *Notitia dignitatum*
[154] Veg., *Epit.* 3.6.4., "Primum itineraria omnium regionum, in quibus bellum geritur, plenissime debet habere perscripta." Cf. Daniela Dueck, *Geography in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 60-61.
[155] e.g. *Fasti triumphales* and *Fasti Capitolini*. Cf. Attilio Degrassi, *Fasti Capitolini* (Turin: Corso Rocconigi, 1954).

paratactic presentation of information implies a complete or nearly complete transmission of knowledge from author to reader. At an early date, Xenophon used lists of gnomic anecdotes in his *Memorabilia* and *Cyropaedia* to display the virtues of great men. In the Hellenistic period, a more complete encyclopedic tradition developed at Alexandria as a means of organizing scientific and literary knowledge. Although not strictly speaking a list, Marcus Terentius Varro's *Disciplinae* catalogued all knowledge into different *artes*.[156] Pliny expanded on this ideal of universalized knowledge in his ambitious *Naturalis Historia*. The work opens with a lengthy index of each book's contents and sources, and each subsequent book follows that arrangement, listing out subject after subject in paragraph form.[157]

In the Second Sophistic, lists became a vehicle for displaying one's knowledge and rhetorical talents. The works of Apuleius provide a good illustration of this. In his *Apologia*, Apuleius lists thirteen different kinds of fish with complex-sounding Greek names in order to contrast his significant scientific knowledge with the parochial simplicity of his opponent.[158] The *Florida*, another one of Apuleius' extant works, is itself a *florilegium*, a series of excerpts from Apuleius' speeches and literary works meant to put on show the author's learning and wit. To a modern reader, these sorts of sophistic lists can seem pedantic, but ancient elites took them seriously as intellectual exercises. Aulus Gellius describes a carriage ride in which, to avoid filling his mind with useless thoughts, he attempted to recall the different words used for *telum* and *gladius* in Roman

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[156] Gian Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. Joseph P. Solodow, rev. Don Fowler and Glenn W. Most (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 218.
[157] Plin., *Nat.* 1.
[158] Apul. *Apol.* 38.

histories.[159] Throughout *Attic Nights*, Gellius show a genuine interest in cataloguing antiquarian information, and he expresses hope that his haphazard presentation of material may amuse the reader and inspire him to further study.[160] Gerald Sandy observes that the writing of compendia blossomed during the Second Sophistic as writers sought to epitomize and compile philosophical and technical information into new treatises.[161] For Platonists, Sophists, and Stoics, knowledge was viewed as a series of arts which could be understood individually.[162] The list offered a straightforward format through which to approach this task.

Military writers occupied a special place within this literary environment. They show the same interest in codifying different categories of knowledge, but still ostensibly contended to produce works of practical import. In this regard, lists became an especially important element of the tradition, for they allowed a presentation of *exempla* and general principles which could theoretically be referenced quickly. There is some debate over whether military handbooks were actually used for practical reasons on a regular basis. Besides Frontinus and Arrian, most military writers were "armchair generals," men with no hands-on experience, and we have little evidence for the consultation of handbooks or stratagem collections by commanders.[163] Nevertheless, during the Republic and

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[159] Gel., 10.25. "ne quid aliarum ineptiarum vacantem stupentemque animum occuparet."
[160] Ibid., praef.
[161] Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius: Apuleius and the Second Sophistic* (New York: Brill, 1997), 73-74.
[162] Everett L. Wheeler, "Polyaenus: *Scriptor Militaris*," in *Polyainos: Neue Studien*, ed. Kai Brodersen (Berlin: Verlag Antike, 2010), 20.
[163] Brian Campbell, "Teach Yourself How to Be a General," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987): 19. But cf. 26-27 citing the example of Arrian using a new formation against the Alani inspired by his knowledge of military theory. Also, Cf. James Morton, "Polyaenus in Context: The *Strategica* and Greek Identity in the Second Sophistic Age," in *Polyainos: Neue Studien*, ed. Kai Brodersen (Berlin: Verlag Antike, 2010), 118. Polybius declares that generals could gain experience by reading histories, learning from technical treatises, and serving in the field (11.8.1-2), Cicero describes Lucullus reading military literature on a voyage (*Ac.* 2.2), and Sallust has Marius say that a man should read military handbooks before running for consul (*Iug.* 85.10). For a similar sentiment, cf. Cic., *Balb.* 47.

Principate, the amateurish nature of political authority and the lack of formal military training make the use technical literature plausible. Inexperienced senators, bureaucrats, and emperors who found themselves in positions of command could conceivably find stratagem collections and military treatises useful or at the very least reassuring.[164] From the fourth century onwards, military training became more institutionalized, and handbooks appear to have been used with some regularity.[165]

There are two basic kinds of ancient military handbooks: "precepts on strategy and tactics" and "technical accounts of drill, formations, and weaponry."[166] The earliest extant handbook, Aeneas Tacticus' fourth-century BC *Poliorketike Biblos*, falls into the first of these categories and gives advice for defending against a siege.[167] The organization of the work is not very systematic and has puzzled commentators for some time.[168] No lists or table of contents are extant, but the loss of the end of the book and Aeneas' other work(s)[169] leaves open the remote possibility that a summarizing list could have been included somewhere. The safest guess, however, remains that Aeneas, writing in the infancy of technical military literature, employed a casual rather than systematic

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[164] Campbell, "Teach Yourself How to be a General," 27. Pretzler, "Polyainos the Historian?," 105-107.
[165] Bernard S. Bachrach, "Some Observations Concerning the Education of the 'Officer Corps' in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries," in *La Noblesse Romaine et les Chefs Barbares du IIIe au VIIe Siecle*, ed. Francois Vallet and Michael Kazanski, (Rouen: Association Francaese d'Archeologie Merovingienne, 1995), 7-11, identifies this shift as the result of reforms under Diocletian, Constantine, and Valentinian I. Some of Bachrach's evidence for the use of handbooks by the officer corps is circumstantial, as he himself notes (e.g. Germanus of Auxerre's tactics could have been informed by common sense rather than traditional military doctrine transmitted in handbooks).
[166] Campbell, "Teach Yourself How to be a General," 13. There is obviously some overlap in these arbitrary categories, but most textbooks fall closer to one end of the spectrum than the other.
[167] David Whitehead, ed. trans. *Aineias the Tactician: How to Survive Under Siege, A Historical Commentary, with Translation and Introduction*, Second Edition (London: Bristol Classical Press), 16. Title in doubt.
[168] Ibid., 18-20. Whitehead finds an approximate tripartite division most appealing: 1-14 preparatory measures before a siege, 15-31 operations against an enemy near or approaching the city, 32-40 operations while the enemy is "within striking distance of the walls."
[169] Ibid., 13-16 for a discussion of the evidence for other works. The only ones which we can be sure Aeneas also wrote were the *Παρασκευαστικὴ βίβλος* (Aen. Tact. 7.4, 8.5, 21.1, 40.8; Plb. 10.44) and the *Πoριστικὴ βίβλος* (Aen. Tact. 14.2).

treatment of his subject. The chapter headings and divisions are presented in the manuscript tradition in such an inconsistent way that they likely never existed in the original text.[170] In addition to this casual structure, Aeneas generally avoided jussive and proclamatory remarks. In fact, he exhorts his reader to judge for himself the merits of the treatise: "In this also, as with all other decisions, it is necessary to consider the objections to the things written above, so that one does not thoughtlessly cling to something bad."[171] Given Aeneas' intellectual approach to military writing, an authoritative list of summarizing gnomic statements would be inappropriate.

If Aeneas' work can be judged to have been written with an eye to practical use, later Hellenistic authors abandoned their predecessor in favor of purely theoretical and philosophical texts. Asclepiodotus, student of the philosopher Poseidonius, produced a work in the first century BC entitled *Τακτικὴ κεφάλαια*.[172] Poseidonius also wrote a *Τέχνη τακτική*, but it is unknown how much his student followed his example.[173] As the title would suggest, Asclepiodotus' treatise is succinct. Only a sentence is dedicated to the introduction, and headings are used to set apart different sections. This has led to the belief that Asclepiodotus was either summarizing a previous work or creating a set of lecture notes.[174] Asclepiodotus' mathematical approach to describing the phalanx divorces the work from military reality. At one point, he states that the ideal unit would consist of 16,384 men (2^{14}) because that number "is divisible by two down to unity."[175]

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[170] Ibid., 47.
[171] Aen. Tact., 2.8. "ὡς δὲ αὕτως καὶ κατὰ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων θελημάτων χρὴ τά ἐνόντα ὑπεναντία τοῖς προγεγραμμένοις ὑπονοεῖν ἵνα μῆ ἀπερισκέπτως τι ἕτερον αἱρῇ."
[172] He also wrote a work on meteorological phenomena; cf. Sen., *Nat.* 6.17, 22.
[173] Ael., *Tact.* praef.
[174] The Illinois Greek Club, ed., trans., *Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, Onasander* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), 237. The putative title supports this assessment.
[175] Ascl., 2.7. "τὴν φάλαγγα τῶν ὁπλιτῶν μυρίων ἑξακισχιλίων τριακοσίων ὀγδοήκοντα τεσσάρων, ὡς δίχα διαιρουμένην." Translation by Illinois Greek Club, 257.

Diagrams are provided and referred to in the text to illustrate the author's geometrical formations and maneuvers. Although Asclepiodotus' treatise seems to have been written for purely intellectual and not practical use, the inclusion of a table of contents, diagrams, and headings shows organizational development in the genre that would continue under later writers.

The works of Aelian and Arrian expand on this tradition of technical manuals. Their works are so similar that some editions print them side by side for comparison. The consensus seems to be that both men drew from the same source rather than one from the other. Because of this, it is difficult not to view the two treatises as somewhat derivative. Nevertheless, it has been persuasively argued by Philip Stadter that even in military treatises dealing with mostly antiquarian topics – such as the Macedonian phalanx – some modern observations and innovations crept in, along with corrections of previous work.[176] At the same time, some of the more practical additions find themselves expressed in lists. For example, Aelian included a list of different commands before giving his concluding remarks.[177] It is not clear that these treatises would have been of much use in the field, but they show an even greater level of detail and organization than Asclepiodotus' work.

In tandem with this tradition of technical manuals, the genre of stratagem collections developed. These works were essentially lists of *exempla* organized thematically, chronologically, ethnographically, or by character. Most of these stratagems are tactical and strategic ploys used to defeat the enemy through brains rather

[176] Stadter, "The Ars Tactica of Arrian," 127-128.
[177] Ael., *Tact.* 53.

than brawn, but some include material of a less military nature.[178] As it stands, there are only two extant stratagem collections from antiquity: Frontinus' *Stratagemata* (composed between AD 84 and 88) and Polyaenus' *Strategica* (c. AD 160).[179] Hermogenes, son of Charidemus, wrote two no longer extant books of stratagems at about the same time.[180] Later on, Christian authors would include stratagems in their works of miscellany; Clement of Alexandria wrote of Moses' "stratagems," and Julius Africanus listed stratagems in book seven of his *Κεστοί*.[181]

The tradition seems to have grown out of vignettes from historical narratives. As early as the fourth century, Aeneas Tacticus draws on stories from Herodotus and more recent events to illustrate his examples.[182] One passage in particular alludes to a separate work on *Ἐπιβουλαί* (plots) which would have probably included more complete selections of *exempla*.[183] Over time these collections of *exempla* became a separate genre in their own right. Demetrius of Phalerum wrote two books of *Strategika* which may have included military stratagems.[184] Historians may have even begun to use stratagem collections as source material for particular episodes.[185] By the time of the first century BC, the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* pointed out that stratagems should be treated in separate military works:

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[178] Cf. Fron., *Str.*, praef., "sollertia ducum facta, quae a Graecis una στρατηγημάτων appellation comprehensa sunt." Some less military examples are ibid., 4.3 (De continentia) and 4.4 (De iustitia).
[179] Everett L. Wheeler, *Stratagem and the Vocabulary of Military Trickery* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1988), 1.
[180] Wheeler, "Polyaenus," 19.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Whitehead, *Aineias the Tactician*, 38-39.
[183] Aen. Tact., 11.2, 28.7. Whitehead, *Aineias the Tactician*, 128. Wheeler, "Polyaenus," 20, n. 51. Whether this was part of his *Preparations* (*Παρασκευαστικὴ βίβλος*) or a separate book is uncertain.
[184] Diog. Laert., 5.80; Plut., *Mor.* 189D, Demetrius recommends that Ptolemy "buy and read books about kingship and command" (τὰ περὶ βασιλείας καὶ ἡγεμονίας βιβλία κτᾶσθαι καὶ ἀναγινώσκειν). Cf. Wheeler, "Polyaenus," 20.
[185] Wheeler, "Polyaenus," 21.

> *Dolus* is exercised in the use of money, promises, lies, anticipation, feints, and other things about which I would speak at a more fitting time if ever I desired to write about military matters (*de re militari*) or the administration of the state.[186]

Frontinus and Polyaenus' works give us the most complete view into this sort of military writing. Frontinus, himself a former military commander and consular, wrote a treatise on military science which no longer survives. The *Stratagemata* was meant to serve as a postscript to his previous, and more systematic, *De re militari*. In his preface, Frontinus explains the value of a list of historical anecdotes:

> I neither ignore nor deny that historians have also encompassed within the course of their own work this topic [i.e. stratagems] and that whatever examples are in some way renowned have been passed down by authors. But, I think, an attention to brevity is owed to busy men. Indeed, it is a lengthy task to pursue examples one at a time and strewn about through the massive body of histories. And those writers who have selected noteworthy examples have bewildered the reader just as if under a large heap.[187]

The stratagem collection, then, more than any other sort of military work, found its value specifically in the abridgement and organization of other information. These works were more than exhaustive catalogues, they ideally sought to distill a vast heap of anecdotes (*acervus rerum*) down to quintessential *exempla*.

This did not necessarily make such lists easy to use. Frontinus' work was indexed and arranged based on topics such as "on concealing plans" or "on quelling mutinies."[188] Frontinus intended this arrangement to allow quick reference in the field, and one could

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[186] *Rhet. Her.* 3.3 "dolus consumitur in pecunia, pollicitatione, dissimulatione, maturatione, mentitione, et ceteris rebus de quibus magis idoneo tempore loquemur si quando de re militari aut de administratione rei pulicae scribere velimus." Wheeler, *Stratagem and the Vocabulary of Military Trickery,* 58-62 argues that *dolus* can be a synonym for stratagem.

[187] Fron. *Str.* praef. "Illud neque ignoro neque infitior, et rerum gestarum scriptores indagine operis sui hanc quoque partem esse complexos et ab auctoribus exemplorum quidquid insigne aliquo modo fuit traditum. Sed, ut opinor, occupatis velocitate consuli debet. Longum est enim singula et sparsa per immensum corpus historiarum persequi, et hi, qui notabilia excerpserunt, ipso velut acervo rerum confuderunt legentem."

[188] Ibid., "de occultandis consiliis," "de seditione militum compescenda."

imagine a general consulting a relevant section of the *Strategemata* before an engagement.[189] For a variety of reasons, however, such a use seems unlikely under most circumstances. Most commanders would have had a cadre of career soldiers directing tactical and logistical operations, so the often impressionistic anecdotes found in the *Stratagemata* would have proved to be of limited use in the field.[190] Moreover, at the time at which Frontinus wrote, the end of the first century AD, most literature was still read from scrolls of papyrus, not codices.[191] If a general wished to reference a section of Frontinus, he would have to haul out each scroll and find the relevant section or have a slave do it for him. More likely, commanders – if they read from a work like the *Stratagemata* – would simply peruse the work during the winter months and recall passages from memory at later times.[192]

If Frontinus' list of stratagems would have proved difficult to use while on campaign, Polyaenus' would have been of even less practical value. Whereas Frontinus' lists were organized according strategic and tactical situations, Polyaenus' *Strategika* was sorted ethnographically, chronologically, and prosopographically.[193] If a general wished to reference Polyaenus' work while in the field, he would have needed to have read the entire work in advance, recall the individual who had carried out the stratagem he wished

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[189] Cf. Fron. *Str.* praef. "species eorum, quae instruant ducem in his, quae ante proelium gerenda sunt."
[190] Proconsuls could select "viri militares" as legates to assist with military duties; this structure remained relatively unchanged under the principate, Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 396. Frontinus remained skeptical of relying on one's subordinates for expert knowledge, Fron., *Aq.* praef. 2, "etsi necessariae partes sunt ad ministerium, tamen ut manus quaedam et instrumentum agentis."
[191] Hall, *A Companion to Classical Texts*, 1968.
[192] One may call to mind the fact that Caesar probably did the main work on his *Commentarii* at the end of each campaigning season during the winter months. Conte, *Latin Literature*, 227.
[193] Cf. the table of contents in R. Shepherd, ed., trans., *Polyaenus's Stratagems of War* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, Inc., 1974), xxix-xxxv.

to imitate, and look up under that character's name.[194] Some of the stratagems are drawn from mythical characters, and Polyaenus even included a section on stratagems carried out by women.[195]

Although this more literary presentation of material would seem to preclude pragmatic use, Polyaenus still attempted to present the work as having practical value. He dedicated the *Strategika* to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus before they set out for their Parthian campaign. Unable to serve on account of his advanced age, Polyaenus presented his work as a substitute for actual military service:

> I offer these supplies of strategic insight, as stratagems of past generals, a great compilation of past deeds both for yourselves and for those men sent by you – polemarchs, generals, legates, tribunes, prefects, or any other commanders – who teach the prowess (*ἀρετή*) and skills (*τέχνη*) of ancient successes.[196]

It is absurd to think that the emperors could actually have made use of Polyaenus' stratagems while in the field, but the *topos* of practical application persists. This attitude was not unique to antiquity. As late as the eighteenth century, R. Shepherd dedicated a translation of Polyaenus to Lord Marquis Cornwallis and believed it would be relevant to campaigning in India.[197] To this day, military academies require students to take courses such as "The History of the Military Art" which require the student to engage in case

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[194] Morton, "Polyaenus in Context," 119.
[195] Polyaen., 1.1-13, 6.1, 8.
[196] Ibid., 1.praef.2, "τῆς στρατηγικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἐφόδια ταυτὶ προσφέρω, ὅσα τῶν πάλαι γέγονε στρατηγήματα, ὑμῖν τε αὐτοὶς πολλὴν ἐμπειρίαν παλαιῶν ἔργων, τοῖς τε ὑπὸ ὑμῶν πεμπομένοις πολεμάρχοις ἢ στρατηγοῖς ἢ μυριάρχοις ἢ χιλιάρχοις ἢ ἑξακοσιάρχοις ἢ ὅσαι ἄλλαι ὅπλων ἀρχαὶ, διδασκομένοις ἀρχαίων κατορθωμάτων ἀρετὰς καὶ τέχνας."
[197] Shepherd, xix-xx. "Since the introduction of gunpowder it must be acknowledged that the art of war has undergone a material alteration. But though the manner of engaging be different; seasons, ground, forage, surprises, retreats, and all the manoeuvres that flow from these subjects of military operation, are much the same as they were a thousand years ago; and still as practicable."

studies.[198] For the ancient reader, stratagem collections seem to have drawn their appeal from a belief in the general applicability of historical *exempla* and the ostensible convenience that such a list could give. Even if a reader would have trouble referencing or applying a work like the *Strategika* or *Stratagemata* in the field, a reader could hope for personal improvement by studying a list, for the author had culled the most important episodes from the dross of history and extracted the stratagemic essence from each example.

In a similar vein, Onasander produced a treatise on generalship in which he outlined the best qualities of a commander. Unlike a stratagem collection, Onasander used no historical *exempla* to illustrate his points. Instead he lists and briefly describes the moral and personal qualities necessary in a general – self-restraint, vigilance, etc. – before providing a more detailed account of which particular activities the general should perform.[199] As with Vegetius' *regulae*, it is unclear how (if at all) Onasander's gnomic statements on generalship were set apart from the rest of the text. At least two manuscripts have numbers in the margin, and one manuscript puts the first letter of each new "quality" in red.[200] Whatever the case, we see in Onasander's treatise a list that goes beyond a simple selection of examples. By beginning his treatise with a summarizing list, Onasander unambiguously displays the general principles which will remain operative throughout his whole treatise. For example, when Onasander outlines how the general should inspire his men and allay their concerns, the reader will recall that one of

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[198] United States Military Academy, *Academic Program: Class of 2015* (West Point, New York), 17, 398-400. Ancient *exempla* remain an important part of the curriculum. One of the most famous graduates, Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1948), 325, stated that "every ground commander seeks the battle of annihilation; so far as conditions permit, he tries to duplicate in modern war the classic example of Cannae."
[199] Onas., 1.1-18.
[200] The Illinois Greek Club, *Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, Onasander*, 374-375.

the most important qualities of a general is to "be a capable speaker."[201] Onasander's list of qualities in essence gives an executive summary of the whole work, a work in which the author "not only arrayed guiding principles of generalship, but also endeavored to make out the art of the general and the practical wisdom in these things."[202]

In the fourth book of his *Stratagemata,* Frontinus also may have compiled a general list of maxims and gnomic statements on generalship. As with Frontinus' other books, this book was organized according to various themes, but instead of specific historical *exempla*, the book focuses on more generalized virtues, qualities, and maxims. The authenticity of *Stratagemata* 4 has been variously argued.[203] A slight consensus seems to rest on Frontinus' authorship, but we cannot be certain. Whatever the case, the book was probably appended at some point not too long after Frontinus' death.[204] *Stratagemata* 4 gives a variety of moralizing advice for the commander, much like Onasander's treatise on generalship, but presented in the guise of an assortment of stratagems.

Ancient textbooks were very different from our own; they simultaneously sought to instruct professionals, to entertain the casual reader, and to show off the author's learning.[205] A modern reader may judge the lists of stratagems, general qualities, or maxims found in ancient military handbooks to be trivial or pedantic catalogues. One commentator derided Polyaenus' *Strategika* as "wertlos."[206] Köchly and Rüstow deemed Onasander's treatise a "wilderness of general phrases," whose "useful observations are

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[201] Onas., 14, 2.13. "λέγειν δ' ἱκανόν."
[202] Ibid., proem.3. "μὴ μόνον στρατηγικὰς συνεταξάμην ὑφηγήσεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ στρατηγικῆς ἐστοχασάμην καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτοὶς φρονήσεως."
[203] Charles E. Bennett, ed., trans., *Frontinus: The Stratagems and The Aqueducts of Rome* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), xvii-xxiv.
[204] Ibid., xviii-xix.
[205] Campbell, "Teach Yourself How to Be a General," 27.
[206] Johannes Kromayer, quoted in Wheeler, "Polyaenus," 7.

but grains in the chaff of trivialities."[207] The seemingly tiresome lists found in these ancient authors have only limited appeal when held up to modern standards. Indeed, Polyaenus and Frontinus seem less relevant than a Clausewitz, and their military observations often strike the modern reader as common-sense platitudes, but this assessment misunderstands the generic purpose of their works. Approached on their own terms, the lists found in ancient military handbooks take on new significance. They allowed the author to present himself as an authority, somebody who had sifted through vast amounts of material and mined the best examples and principles. At the same time, the abbreviated format of a list helped ancient military writers give their works a veneer of practicality.

Vegetius' *Regulae* in Context

As part of this tradition of list-making, Vegetius' "general rules of war" make more sense. A basic feature of ancient military handbooks is an emphasis on concision; an ideal treatise on warfare broke down the *acervus* of historical and theoretical material into the most fundamental elements. Whether through lists of *exempla*, maxims, or virtues, the military writer became the mediator between the *ars militaris* and the uninitiated reader. In Vegetius' case, he restates his main points in order to reinforce them within his reader's mind.[208]

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[207] Quoted in Illinois Greek Club, *Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, Onasander*, 349.

[208] N.P. Milner, *Vegetius' Epitome of Military Science*, 2nd edition (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), xxvi. "These rules were intended to provide an aide-memoire of the main principles of field strategy and tactics; such recapitulation was a valued technique of late antique didactic writers." Milner notes that Palladius uses the same strategy when he lists his *sententiae* at 1.6.1ff: "Sed ubi haec, quae naturalia sunt neque humana ope curari possunt, diligentius aestimaris, exequi te conuenit partem, quae restat industriae: cuius haec erit cura uel maxima, ut has, quas subieci, ex omni opere rustico in primis debeas tenere sententias…"

The word *regula* originally referred to a measuring rod used to draw lines.[209] By applying the transferred meaning, "rule" or "principle," to describe his summary, Vegetius suggests that military expertise derives from literary authorities and that there is an absolute standard by which one can judge past actions. It is no mistake that Vegetius proudly refers to his work as a "regula proeliandi, immo vicendi artificium."[210] As with other Romans, Vegetius sees his specialized area of knowledge as a τέχνη, but he also presents it as an indispensable craft "without which others are unable to exist."[211] In view of this epistemology, Vegetius' *regulae* function as guiding principles upon which the author hopes his dedicatee, the emperor, will base his policies.

As a practical matter, Vegetius' *regulae* also make sense in the period in which he wrote. Latin persisted as the language of military command as late as the seventh century, even in the eastern empire, owing to a variety of factors, including the conservative nature of the military bureaucracy.[212] The linguistic makeup of the army, however, became less and less homogenous, due to the recruitment of large numbers of *foederati* from a variety of ethnic groups. The memorization of rules and regulations is a common feature of armies in many periods, and the late-Roman army required that these be read out by officers to their respective units.[213] In such circumstances, a list of general principles could prove useful for training an increasingly diverse officer corps. Moreover, the brevity of the 33 *regulae* would have allowed relatively quick reference, at least compared to longer stratagem collections and other lists. In the context of the late-

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[209] *OLD*, s.v. *regula*, 1.
[210] Veg., *Epit.* 3.26.38.
[211] Ibid., 3.1, "O uiros summa admiratione laudandos, qui eam praecipue artem ediscere uoluerunt, sine qua aliae artes esse non possunt!"
[212] Phillip Rance, "The *De Militari Scientia* or Müller Fragment as a philological resource. Latin in the East Roman army and two new loanwords in Greek: *palmarium* and **recala*," *Glotta* 86 (2010): 63-64.
[213] Cf. Maur., *Strat.* 6-8, where the author orders regulations be read in Latin and Greek and *Strat.* 3.5, where the author transliterates into Greek a Latin harangue.

Roman military, *regulae* could have functioned as a handy reference for officers not willing or able to consult a lengthy technical treatise.

This does not mean that the textual problems have vanished. There is still a possibility that Vegetius or an interpolator took the *regulae* from another source. Nevertheless, this remains speculation, and it cannot change the fundamental fact that whoever penned the rules understood the integral part that lists played in ancient military handbooks.[214] One lesson from this study is that textual critics must keep their aesthetic judgments from interfering with a fair assessment of an author's goals and the tradition within which he wrote. An ancient reader approached military handbooks with different literary expectations than a modern reader.

Additionally, this study of Vegetius' *regulae* and ancient military handbooks sheds light on the increasing importance of summaries and epitomes in late antiquity. *Breviaria,* monographs, and biographies were supplanting longer and more traditional works. At the time of the transition to the medieval period, Vegetius' *Epitoma* was well situated to become an extremely influential work, and his *regulae* – a distillation of the author's most incisive observations and prescriptions – were to become the most popular section of his work.[215]

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[214] It is worth noting that, if Schenk is correct in asserting that Vegetius took his *regulae* from Frontinus, we still must confess that a list of rules was part of the tradition of military literature long before Vegetius ever lived.

[215] Christopher Allmand, *The* De Re Militari *of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.

CHAPTER 3

VEGETIUS' *REGULAE* AND MAURICE'S *GNOMIKA*

During the Medieval period and the Renaissance, Vegetius' *Epitoma* enjoyed considerable popularity. The author's Christianity and his portrayal of the disciplined soldier appealed to monastic sensibilities and helped ensure the book's wide circulation from an early date. For instance, Bede and Alcuin both show familiarity with the work, or at least excerpts of it.[216] By far the most copied section of Vegetius' *Epitoma* was his *regulae bellorum generales*.[217] Most studies have focused on Vegetius' reception in the Latin-speaking West, but its influence – at least through the *regulae* – also extended into the East.

In the *Strategikon* of Maurice, Vegetian material makes such an appearance. The treatise, written in the late sixth or early seventh century, includes a book of *γνωμικά.* Many of these sayings are drawn from or inspired by classical authorities. The compiler of the list includes a Greek translation of twenty-one of Vegetius' *regulae* interspersed among a number of other maxims. The similarities and differences between Maurice's *γνωμικά* and Vegetius' *regulae* shed light on the evolution of military practice, the reception of Vegetius, and the genre of military writing in the Byzantine Empire. Maurice's use of Vegetius points to the importance of *ἀποφθέγματα*, "terse pointed

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[216] C.W. Jones, "Bede and Vegetius," *Classical Review* 46 (1932): 248-49. Michael D. Reeve, "The Transmission of Vegetius's *Epitoma rei militaris*," *Aevum* 74.1 (January-April, 2000): 249-250. Bede, *Hist eccles.* 1.5 (cf. Veg., 1.24.1, 4), *Retract. in Acta* 27.13-16 (cf. Veg., 2.25.5), *De temp. rat.* 28 (cf. Veg., 4.35.1 and 36.1-2), and *De temp. rat.* 29, (cf. Veg., 4.42.2). Alcuin, *Ep.* 257 (cf. Veg., 1.praef.1, 6).

[217] Christopher Allmand, *The* De Re Militari *of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 39-41. Two manuscripts have "nota totum" scribed in the margin.

sayings,"[218] as a sub-genre of military literature. The prominence of classicizing references within these lists shows the degree to which Greek military writers in the early Byzantine period still leaned heavily upon their classical antecedents. At the same time, Maurice's use of Latin *regulae* at such a late date reflects the continued importance of Latin as a language of military bureaucracy. This classical influence, however, should not be taken as evidence of a generally archaizing or backward-looking military literature. In many cases, Vegetius' *regulae* have been manipulated by their translator in order to suit new terminology and military practices. Vegetius' reception in the *Strategikon* reveals the complex negotiation in Byzantine military literature between the early-medieval and classical worlds.

The *Strategikon*: Author, Date, and Nature of the Work

The date of the *Strategikon* has been debated in some depth.[219] Most arguments rely upon an analysis of the enemies discussed in the text, especially in book 11. The Arabs, for instance, are not mentioned, suggesting that the book must have been written before 634. Likewise, the prominence of Avars and Turks suggests that the work was written well after 568.[220] Within this range, a number of more specific dates have been proposed.

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[218] *LSJ*, s.v. *ἀποφθέγματα*.
[219] For a detailed summary of past arguments, cf. Philip Rance, "Tactics and *Tactica* in the Sixth Century: Tradition and Originality" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1993), 28-36.
[220] Ibid., 30. The Romans first made direct contact with the Avars in 558, and an embassy of Turks first arrived in Constantinople in 568. The adoption of Avar military equipment (*Strat.* 1.2.18, 2.20-21, 2.38, 2.46, and 2.59-61) by Roman troops shows that the two peoples must have been in contact for some time. Moreover, the mentioning of the Lombards as a light-haired race (11.3) suggests that the work was written after their migration into Italy (568).

Some scholars lean towards dating the treatise to the reign of Heraklios (621-641).[221] This date would fit well with that emperor's attempts to legitimize his authority through connections with past emperors. Under this theory, the *Strategikon* would have been composed and ascribed to Maurikios as part of the preparations in the winter of 621 for Heraklios' Persian campaign. Still, this suggestion is weak because it relies on certain unclear passages from the poems of George of Pisidia to prove that Heraklios wrote a military treatise over the winter.[222]

A more likely date for the *Strategikon* is the reign of Maurikios (582-602). Attempts have been made to identify allusions in the text to individual engagements, but these arguments are inconclusive.[223] The best evidence for dating the text to the end of the sixth century is the fact that the Slavs and Antae are the most discussed tribes in book 11.[224] Most interestingly, the *Strategikon* specifically recommends campaigning across the Danube over the winter months when fighting the Slavs.[225] Aside from campaigns in the early sixth century, few Byzantine generals before the 590s undertook campaigns across the Danube. According to Philip Rance, "the detailed advice given by the *Strategikon*, with its frequent personal touches, can only have come from experience campaigning North of the Danube."[226] It also stands to reason that the *Strategikon's*

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[221] Notably, E. Darko, "Influences touraniennes sur l'evolution de l'art militaire des Grecs, des Romains et des Byzantins," *Byzantion* 12 (1937): 123-126.
[222] Rance, "Tactics and Tactica," 38. George of Pisidia, *De expiditione Persica* 2.38-48, 52-65, 177-181.
[223] e.g. the incident in Arzanene (*Strat.* 10.1.7-8) may refer to the siege of Akbas (583), the siege of Chlomaron (586), or some unrecorded event. Cf. Rance, "Tactics and *Tactica*," 33-36.
[224] Maur., *Strat.*, 11.4.
[225] Ibid., 11.4.82 ff., "χρὴ δὲ τὰς κατ' αὐτῶν ἐγχειρήσεις ἐν χειμερίοις μᾶλλον καιροῖς γίνεσθαι" ("You should make your attacks against them in the winter months rather than the more seasonable ones.").
[226] Rance, "Tactics and *Tactica*," 32.

advice on wintering above the Danube could not have been written after the disastrous mutiny of 602, a revolt brought on by just this strategy.[227]

Whatever date is chosen for the text's composition will have a considerable bearing on the question of who wrote the text. If we assume that the work was written during the reign of Maurikios (582-602), as allusions to the Balkan campaign would suggest, the author was probably the Emperor Maurikios himself, one of his senior generals, or his brother-in-law Philippikos.[228] Whatever the case, the writer of the *Strategikon* appears to have been a man with personal military experience and with connections to the court at Byzantium. This is an important point, for the *Strategikon's* "official air" distinguishes it from its literary predecessors.[229] Military men, like Frontinus and Arrian, had written military treatises of their own accord, but Maurice's *Strategikon* stands out in that it appears to have been written within imperial circles and promulgated at the behest of the emperor.

In this official context, the *Strategikon* consists of an original reworking of older military writings along with a detailed picture of Byzantine organization, tactics, and strategy in the late sixth and early seventh centuries.[230] The author's common-sense advice, unembellished style, and straightforward vocabulary – especially when compared

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[227] Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian: Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 131-132.

[228] For an overview of the evidence for authorship, cf. George T. Dennis, ed., trans., *Maurice's Strategikon: Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), xvi-xvii. John Earl Wiita, "The Ethnika in Byzantine Military Treatises" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1977), 30-49, marshals arguments for Philippikos based on circumstantial biographical details and references in the *Strategikon* to Hannibal and Scipio within the text (within the problematic book 8). Ultimately, the issue remains unresolved, and Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian*, 132, n. 63, writes that "speculation about the author is unprofitable." For the purposes of the present chapter, the author of the *Strategikon* will be referred to as "Maurice" and the emperor as "Maurikios."

[229] Rance, "Tactics and *Tactica*," 41, cites the promulgation of military regulations within the text (e.g. *Strat.* 1.6-8).

[230] Alfonse Dain, **"**Les stratégistes byzantins," *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967): 345, "L'ensemble forme un tout cohérent et ordonné, qui a l'avantage de décrire l'état réel des armées byzantines dans la dernière moitié du VI^{e} siecle."

to the features of his main literary models such as Onasander's *Strategicus* and Arrian's *Tactica* – suggest a practical rather than purely literary purpose.[231] For instance, in the place of the archaic jargon of previous writers, the author uses contemporary words for unit structures, such as *βάνδον*, *τάγμα*, and *ἀριθμός*. Later Byzantine writers took a similar tack, and their style is generally so straightforward that George T. Dennis said that "Byzantine military writers, just like their modern counterparts, made no effort to write in an imaginative or sophisticated manner."[232] This perhaps goes too far, but it is true that the military men of Constantinople preferred practical language.

Maurice himself claimed to be writing a work different from older, more theoretical handbooks. In his proem, he writes:

> [Ancient writers], in addressing their writings to knowledgeable and experienced men, dealt with topics not readily understood by laymen, and passed over basic, introductory matters, which are particularly necessary nowadays. In our judgment, now, it is essential not to overlook even the most obvious things, which are fundamental if one is to command troops successfully.[233]

This statement of practical intent – itself a literary *topos* – does not mean that Maurice operated outside of the classical tradition of military literature. Instead, the writer adapted and augmented older texts to suit his present needs. So while Maurice still relied on ancient military treatises for source material, his own observations, particularly his

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[231] Dennis, *Maurice's Strategikon*, xv.
[232] George T. Dennis, ed., trans., *The Taktika of Leo VI: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010), xiii.
[233] Maur., *Strat.* pref., "οἱ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς εἰδότας τε καὶ ἐμπείρους ποιούμενοι τὴν γραφὴν ἀσαφεστέραις τοῖς πολλοῖς ἐχρήσαντο παραδόσεσι, τὰ ἀναγκαῖα καὶ συστατικὰ καὶ ὧν νῦν χρεία παραδραμόντες. ἡμεῖς δὲ χρειῶδες καὶ τοῦτο κρίναντες εἶναι, τὸ μηδὲ τὰ πρόχειρα παριδεῖν ὧν χωρὶς ἀσφαλῶς στρατεύειν οὐκ ἔνεστι," George T. Dennis, trans.

ethnographic descriptions, represent an important departure from the tradition of military handbooks.[234]

The Authenticity of *Strategikon* VIII

The eighth book of the *Strategikon*, the focus of this study, is arranged under two subheadings "On General Instructions applying to the General" and "Maxims."[235] Joannes Scheffer proposed that the original title of all of book 8 was Γνωμικά, but modern editors have not followed his suggestion.[236] Whatever the authentic title, the book originally had an internal division. The gnomic statements and advice found in both sections are reminiscent of Onasander's *Strategicus*, Plutarch's *Apophthegmata*, and the fourth book of Frontinus' *Stratagemata*. Much like Vegetius' list of *regulae*, Maurice's *Γνωμικά* have come under fire as possible later interpolations.[237]

One of the best pieces of evidence for this theory is that some of the maxims are redundantly stated in both – and sometimes the same – sections.[238] For instance, at 8.1.5 the author urges generals to take their time when making plans, and at 8.2.31 and 8.2.68, the author gives the same advice, albeit with different language. A few sayings even seem to contradict other parts of the *Strategikon*. Maurice emphatically states that war-

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[234] Polyaenus also includes a book of ethnographic stratagems (book 7), but no other similar works survive from antiquity. Everett L. Wheeler, "Polyaenus: *Scriptor Militaris*," in *Polyainos: Neue Studien*, Kai Brodersen, ed. (Berlin: Verlag Antike, 2010), 48-54.

[235] "Περί καθολικῶν παραγγελμάτων τῷ στρατηγῷ ἁρμοζόντων" and "Γνωμικά."

[236] Joannes Scheffer, *Arriani Tactica et Mauricii Ars Militaris*, facsimile of the 1664 edition (West Germany: Biblio-Verlag Osnabrück, 1967), 462, "Γνωμικὰ – Hunc puto esse titulum generalem huius libri, omissum in indice ab operis initio proposito, et respondere titulo praecedentis libri" ("I think that *Γνωμικά* is the title of this book, omitted in the index from the beginning of the work, and I think that it responds to the title of the preceding book [*Στρατεγικά*]"). Scheffer's proposal is complicated by the fact that the title of book 7 is *Περὶ στρατηγίας*, not *Στρατεγικά*, cf. George T. Dennis and Ernst Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon des Maurikios* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 224.

[237] e.g. Dennis, *Maurice's Strategikon*, 79, brackets book 8.

[238] For an exhaustive list, cf. Rance, "Tactics and *Tactica*," 91, nn. 201-202. Rance identifies at least 27 passages that are redundant.

cries should be avoided, for they can reduce unit cohesion.[239] In book 8, however, he relates the maxim: "an army with a loud war-cry is useful for disheartening the enemy."[240] Likewise, at 7.2.11, Maurice forbids generals from using recently defeated troops for an attack, but he contradicts himself in one of his *Γνωμικά* when he writes that "troops defeated in open battle should not be sheltered…but with their fear raw, they should attack again."[241] The author of the *Strategikon* is usually consistent, but book 8 seems to have been composed with little or no attention to the contents of the rest of the work.

It seems likely, then, that someone appended a book of sayings to the *Strategikon*. Still, the unanimity of the manuscript families supports the inclusion of the *Γνωμικά* at an early date, if not by Maurice himself, then by a later editor.[242] The very fact that the two sections include maxims "indistinguishable in tone and content" suggests the use of older collections.[243] The division may have belonged to that of the original author, for an interpolator would presumably have combined them under one heading. In fact, Maurice seems to have gone back over his work and edited its contents after the addition of the twelfth book on infantry.[244] Under such editorial circumstances, it is plausible that a book of *Γνωμικά* could have been added even with some internal inconsistencies.

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[239] Maur., *Strat.* 2.18.
[240] Ibid., 8.2.46, "μεγαλόφωνον στράτευμα κατὰ τοὺς ἀλαλαγμοὺς ἐπιτήδειον πρὸς τὴν τῶν πολεμίων κατάπληξιν."
[241] Ibid., 8.1.43, "τοῖς ἐν δημοσίᾳ μάχῃ ἡττημένοις οὐ δεῖ ἐνδιδόναι...ἀλλὰ τοῦ φόβου νεαροῦ ὄντος ἐπιτίθεσθαι."
[242] Book VIII appears in M, V, N, P, A, and Lt., Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, 369. Cf. pages 19-23 for an outline of the different MSS. Early in the seventh century, the three main families of manuscripts branched off from the hyparchetype, the product of the so-called "erste Abschrift" (first recension). A *stemma codicum* can be found at Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, 41.
[243] Rance, "Tactics and *Tactica*," 90.
[244] Dennis, *Maurice's Strategikon*, xvii.

Nevertheless, the very real possibility exists that the list of maxims was copied directly from another source.

Classical *Γνωμικά* in Maurice

In fact, many of the *Strategikon's* maxims are found in previous writers. One saying of which Maurice is particularly fond is "οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ στρατηγικὸν, τὸ 'οὐ προσεδόκουν'" ("It does not befit a general to say 'I did not expect that,'" 8.1.26, cf. 8.2.36). This same idea is found in the writings of Polybius, Cicero, and Polyaenus, as well as Syrianus, the author of another sixth century military treatise.[245] Additionally, the orator Isocrates is quoted at 8.2.31: Βουλεύου μὲν βραδέως, ἐπιτέλει δὲ ταχέως τὰ δόξαντα ("plot slowly, but swiftly act out the things decided").[246] Another proverb is attributed to Hannibal by Maurice: "I would rather face a pride of lions led by a sheep than a flock of sheep led by a lion."[247] This same aphorism appears in Plutarch's *Apophthegmata* and Stobaeus' *Florilegium*.[248] The *Iliad* (11.802-803; 16.44-45) is even quoted to demonstrate the need for reserves.[249] Clearly, the writer of these proverbs was well versed in classical literature. Whether they were appended directly from another source or adapted by the author of the *Strategikon* cannot be known for certain, but without doubt many of the maxims were stock phrases in military writings.

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[245] Rance, "Tactics and Tactica," 90; Plb., 10.32.11-12; Cic., *Off.* 1.23.8; Polyaen., 3.9; Syrianus, 20.7.
[246] Isoc., *Ad Dem.* 34. Cf. Suet., *Vita Augusti* 25.4 for some of Augustus' favorite sayings. "'σπεῦδε βραδέως,' 'ἀσφαλὴς γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἀμείνων ἢ θρασὺς στρατηλάτης,' et 'sat celeriter fieri quidquid fiat satis bene.'"
[247] Maur. *Strat.* 8.2.93, "ὁ Καρχηδόνιος Ἀννιβας...ἀπελογίσατο λέγων, βουλοίμην, ἔφη, πρὸς ἀγέλην λεόντων ἔχειν, ἧς ἔλαφος ἄρχει, μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸς ἀγέλην ἐλάφων, ἧς λέων ἐστὶν ἡγεμων." Cf. Ibid., 8.2.79, "ἀρχαῖος ἐστι λόγος, κάλλιον εἶναι λέοντα ἐλάφων ἄρχειν ἢ ἔλαφον λεόντων."
[248] Plut., *Mor.* 187D.3, "φοβερώτερόν ἐστιν ἐλάφων στρατόπεδον ἡγουμένου λέοντος ἢ λεόντων ἐλάφου" (attributed to Chabrias). Stob., *Flor.* 4.61 (attributed to Philip of Macedon).
[249] Maur., *Strat.* 8.2.82.

Translation of Vegetius

Of all classical sources drawn on in this section of the *Strategikon*, the debt to Vegetius is most apparent. Thematically, Maurice picks up on many of the same ideas which Vegetius emphasized in his *Epitoma*. The need for good intelligence and the preference for low risk skirmishes over decisive pitched battles are hallmarks of Vegetius' program. But these are also characteristics of Byzantine strategy over a longer time period. Many historians emphasize this approach's importance for the survival of the eastern half of the Roman Empire.[250] It is hard to say how much of this policy was the result of Vegetius' work and how much of it was the result of conventional military wisdom.

What cannot be doubted is that the writer of the *Strategikon* read Vegetius, or at least a Greek translation of his work. The section on maxims (*Γνωμικά*, 8.2) include twenty-one *regulae* of Vegetius.[251] Nineteen of these occur in the first 28 of the 101 maxims in 8.2, and in the same order as they appear in Vegetius. This suggests that the *Strategikon's* author was not simply recalling examples from memory but was closely following Vegetius' *regulae*. It is of considerable interest that a Latin military work would still be read at such a late date in the East, but what are more interesting are the modifications and additions that the author makes.

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[250] Jonathan Shepard, "Approaching Byzantium," in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*, Jonathan Shepard, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 11-15, briefly outlines the precarious position the state was in and the need to resort to statecraft and diplomacy. Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), passim, attempts to outline a coherent policy within handbooks and argues that this overarching strategy was responsible for the preservation of the empire. Although many of his historical arguments are flawed, his basic observation that the Byzantines preferred persuasion and co-option to pitched battle is accurate. The adage that one should win by brains rather than brawn, although a hallmark of Byzantine strategy, has a well-established classical pedigree.

[251] Milner was evidently the first to identify that Maurice translated Vegetius. Michael D. Reeve, "Notes on Vegetius" *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 44 (1999): 207-208.

Vegetius begins his *regulae* with a general introductory statement about the need to do things that help you and harm the enemy. Maurice provides no such introduction but instead moves directly into his list of *Γνωμικά*. The first maxim – "Before dangers, the general ought to worship God. Then, bold in dangers, he can make supplications to God as to a friend" – does not appear in Vegetius' *Epitoma*.[252] Maurice's next ten maxims appear to be taken from Vegetius.[253] It is telling that Maurice would mention God immediately before relying so heavily on Vegetius. This addition, characteristic of sixth-century Christian texts, suggests that Maurice wanted to give a more religious tone to the *regulae* of Vegetius. In fact, a simple comparison between the *Epitoma* and *Strategikon* shows that the latter had a more theological slant than the former, perhaps due to a shift towards a more theocratic state between the fourth and seventh centuries. Vegetius mentions God only a few times, and then usually only in connection with the emperor, but Maurice takes on a more explicitly Christian tone in his work. He begins his *Strategikon* by appealing to God, the Trinity, and the Virgin Mary.[254] The *Tactica of Leo VI* – a late ninth or early tenth-century treatise – similarly emphasizes religious piety.[255] The Roman military of this period was more explicitly Christian than in previous centuries. In light of this, it makes sense that Maurice would insert a reference to God before citing ancient authorities like Vegetius.

Maurice's translation of Vegetius' *regulae* is fairly faithful to the Latin, but significantly he omits some of Vegetius' key points. Maurice skips over all of the

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[252] Maur., *Strat.* 8.2.1, "Πρὸ τῶν κινδύνων ὁ στρατηγὸς θεραπευέτω τὸ θεῖον · θαρρῶν γὰρ ἐν τοῖς κινδύνοις ὡς πρὸς φίλον αὐτῷ τὸ θεῖον τὰς ἱκεσίας ποιήσεται."
[253] Ibid., 8.2.2-11 = Veg., 3.26.2-5, 7, 9-13
[254] Maur., *Strat.* praef. Maurice decreed that all religious documents begin with "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Savior," but its first recorded use was not until 605 (under Phokas). Wiita, "The Ethnika in Byzantine Military Treatises," 21-22.
[255] In its preface (*Taktika*, praef.) and in its γνωμικὰ κεφαλαία (*Taktika* 20).

regulae concerning tactical formations.[256] These rules may have slipped out of the anterior list that Maurice or his source translated. But even if this is not the case, the omission of Vegetius' "modes" of battle makes sense. For one thing, Maurice recognized that military equipment had changed since the fourth century, and thus the order of battle was very different.[257] Formations for Vegetius' legion – an organization that was more of an ideal than a reality, a piecing together of the republican, early imperial, and late Roman armies – would not have fit well with the Byzantine army of the early middle ages. Second, Maurice developed his own elaborate system of formations.[258] Mentioning Vegetius' six "modes" of battle would have been redundant and confusing. Instead, Maurice simply tells the general to place infantry against infantry, cavalry against cavalry, and so on.[259] (8.2.18). Maurice's omission of Vegetius' tactical *regulae* is a prime example of the *Strategikon's* selective use of the corpus of military literature.

Maurice also adds to Vegetius' *regulae* in some important ways. Maxims 16 and 17 focus on the proper use of allies. Maurice encourages the general to keep an ethnically diverse force in order to prevent mutinies.[260] This nearly contradicts Vegetius' injunction to compose an army of a uniform body of citizens.[261] This change in thinking is perhaps the result of a change in the strategic situation. In the wake of Adrianople and possibly later disasters, Vegetius, much like Ammianus Marcellinus, reacted against the

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[256] Veg., *Epit.* 3.26.8, 18-24.
[257] Cf. Maur., *Strat.* praef.
[258] Especially Ibid., 2, 3, 12.
[259] Maur., *Strat*. 8.2.18, "Πρὸς τὰς τῶν πολεμίων τάξεις τε καὶ δυνάμεις τὰς ἡμετέρας ἀντιτάττειν ὀφείλομεν, τουτέστι πεζοὺς πρὸς πεζούς, ψιλούς τε καὶ ἱππέας καὶ ὁπλίτας κατὰ τῶν ὁμοίων."
[260] Ibid., 8.2.16-17, "Συνετὸς ἡγεμὼν ὁ μὴ πλέον εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ χώραν τῆς οἰκείας δυνάμεως εἰσάγων συμμαχίαν, μήποτε ξυμφρονήσασα καὶ τοὺς κεκτημένους διώξασα αὐτὴ τὴς χωρας κρατήσει. Ἐκ διαφόρων ἐθνῶν ἔστωσαν, εἰ δυνατόν, οἱ σύμμαχοι · οὕτως γὰρ ἂν ἧττον ὁμονοήσουσιν ἐπὶ κακουργίᾳ." ("A wise leader does not lead an allied force greater than his own into his own land, lest they ever join together and drive out the land's inhabitants by force. The allies must be from different nationalities, if possible.")
[261] Veg., *Epit.* 1.28, cf. 2.3.

barbarization of the military, particularly by the Goths,[262] and it was still possible for Vegetius to imagine a return to a purely Roman military force. By the late sixth century, however, it was less realistic for the army to rely solely on Vegetius' imagined "citizen-soldier."[263] A general with first-hand experience, like the author of the *Strategikon*, would know that one must work with the troops one has, and allied troops were at times the only ones available.

Changes in military practice are also reflected in Maurice's choice of words. When he translated Vegetius' rule that generals who trust in cavalry should seek out "aptiora loca…equitibus" ("places better for horsemen," 3.26.24), Maurice added lancers ("καὶ μάλιστα κοντάτοις," 8.2.20 – itself a Latin loanword).[264] This statement accords well with the traditional view that the Byzantine army had by the sixth and seventh centuries become primarily one of cavalry.[265] Indeed, Maurice's *Strategikon* itself mainly treats mounted tactics.[266] The author dedicated the second book to the subject of cavalry battle formations, a topic Vegetius generally avoided, although the deployment of cavalry is mentioned in the third book of his *Epitoma*.[267] Sixth-century historical

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[262] Michael B. Charles, *Vegetius in Context: Establishing the Date of the* Epitoma Rei Militaris (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007), 144-154, argues that Ammianus, unlike Vegetius, is restrained in his criticism of the barbarization of the military. While this serves his argument against a Theodosian date for the *Epitoma*, the distinction is more imagined than real. What could Ammianus' praise of Julius' violent crackdown on the Goths (31.16.8) be, except a tacit recognition that foreign elements within the Roman army needed rooting out? Vegetius' criticism of barbarization is necessarily more explicit due to the prescriptive nature of the *Epitoma*.

[263] Veg., *Epit.* 1.2-7, passim.

[264] Haralambie Mihăescu, "Les éléments latins des 'Tactica Strategica' de Maurice-Urbicius et leur écho en néo-grec," *Revue des études sud-est europeennes* 7 (1969): 156.

[265] The classic, although outdated, treatment is Charles Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages: Volume I, 378-1278* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1924), especially chapter 2, "Commencement of the Supremacy of Cavalry, A.D. 450-552." Recently, Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, 20-21, 56, has reasserted the primacy of cavalry, but ignores more recent scholarship.

[266] Cf. Dain, "Les stratégists byzantins," 345, "Signe des temps, c'est avant tout de la cavalerie qu'il est question dans le *Strategicon*."

[267] Veg., *Epit.* 3.16. This is not because Vegetius was unaware of cavalry matters. See e.g. Veg., *Mul.* 3.6.4, for a detailed discussion of horse breeds and their appropriateness for different purposes.

narratives also tend to feature cavalry as the most important feature of the battlefield.[268] More recent scholars have revised this view and argued that sixth-century sources disproportionately represent the role of cavalry at the expense of infantry.[269] Whatever the relative importance of infantry and cavalry, the army of the Byzantine Empire had begun to rely more on heavy cavalry than it had in Vegetius' time, and for that reason Maurice may have felt the need to elaborate on the *regula*. Indeed, Vegetius was not ignorant of the growing importance of cavalry in the late Roman army, for at the end of his *regulae*, he explained that he skipped a discussion of cavalry "cum praesens doctrina sufficiat" ("because present doctrine suffices," 3.26.34). Maurice apparently felt that this was not the case.

Nevertheless, the main thrust of Vegetius' *regulae* is preserved in Maurice's translation. By keeping the same basic order, albeit with some additions and subtractions, Maurice preserves the unity of Vegetius' basic program. The *regulae* form a sort of ring-composition. Vegetius begins with training (3.26.2-3) and the need to preserve one's forces (4), and ends with the importance of discipline (30) and the indirect rather than direct destruction of the enemy (31-32). Maurice demonstrates that he understood Vegetius' basic tenets not only through his translation of the *regulae*, but also through his paraphrasing of ideas found elsewhere in the *Epitoma*. A version of Vegetius' most well-known aphorism – "qui desiderat pacem praeparet bellum" ("let him

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[268] e.g. Procop., *Wars* 1.1.6-16.

[269] Warren Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army, 284-1081* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 50-53, 108. Philip Rance, "Narses and the Battle of Taginae (Busta Gallorum) 552: Procopius and Sixth-Century Warfare," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 54.4 (2005): 435. The reasons for the bias within our sources are manifold: the most interesting maneuvers were often those of cavalry, many of Procopius' sources were probably cavalry officers, and the *Strategikon* survives whereas other works do not. Procopius' statement at the opening of his *Wars* (1.1.6-16) perhaps should not be taken at face-value: Anthony Kaldellis, "Classicism, Barbarism, and Warfare: Prokopios and the Conservative Reaction to Later Roman Military Policy," *American Journal of Ancient History* 3-4 (2007): 189-218.

who desires peace prepare for war," 3.prol.8) – is echoed by Maurice at 8.2.60, but the same sentiment is also rendered in a slightly different way as one of the maxims: "ἀεὶ τε πραττέτωσαν, κἂν μὴ πόλεμος ἐνοχλεῖ" ("soldiers should always practice, even if war is not troubling them," 8.2.15).

Use of Latin in the Eastern Empire

This reliance on Latin literature by the author of the *Strategikon* should not be surprising. Latin continued to be important in the intellectual life of the sixth century, even in Constantinople. Corippus composed the *Iohannis*, a Latin epic poem, and the *In laudem Iustini minoris*. In the Latin historiographic tradition, Jordannes wrote the *Romana* and *Getica*. Although Greek would soon become the language of Byzantium, the sixth-century court was still a bilingual place.[270]

Moreover, Latin was still the official bureaucratic language of Constantinople. The emperor issued and signed his decrees in Latin.[271] Perhaps most significantly, Tribonian chose to compile the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* in Latin. Even after Tribonian's death, his successors continued to use the language of Scaevola and Ulpian in legal texts. In his *Secret History*, Procopius could complain that Tribonian's replacement, a Libyan named Junilus, only knew how to speak Latin.[272] Although unlikely, this anecdote still attests that Latin was nominally the language of the courtroom.[273]

Additionally, Latin persisted as the language of command in the eastern army into the seventh century AD.[274] Much of this probably reflects military conservatism.

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[270] Belisarius, for instance, was a native speaker of Latin.
[271] e.g. the *Novellae* of Justinian. Proc., *Anecdota* 6.15, attests that the emperor would sign *LEGI* in purple ink.
[272] Proc., *Anecdota* 20.17, "οὐδὲ τὴν γλῶσσαν αὐτὴν ἑλληνίζειν δυνάμενον."
[273] In practice, it seems that Greek translations were often used.
[274] Philip Rance, "The *De Militari Scientia* or Müller Fragment as a philological resource. Latin in the East Roman army and two new loanwords in Greek: *palmarium* and **recala*," *Glotta* 86 (2010): 63-64. There

Throughout the *Strategikon*, military commands are given in Latin, although only in the second-person singular, a suggestion that the use of Latin phraseology was becoming ossified and subsumed into military culture.[275] Maurice also reports the use of the Latin war-cry "deus nobiscum," a holdover from the fourth or fifth century.[276] Still, there is reason to suspect that Latin was used more than just as a relic of past military practice. Maurice orders that his list of regulations be read aloud in both Greek and Latin to his soldiers so that none may be ignorant of the rules.[277] A lengthy Latin harangue is also transmitted in the text, albeit garbled in transliterated Greek letters.[278] As Haralambie Mihăescu has shown, Maurice frequently borrowed words from Latin for technical vocabulary, such as *μήνσορες*, *φοιδεράτος,* and *κοντάτος* (a word already mentioned).[279] Other Byzantine military writers, for example the anonymous author of *De scientia militari,* used similar loanwords.[280]

Based on this survey of the limited use of Latin in literary, legal, and military contexts, it makes sense that Maurice or his source was comfortable with Latin handbooks. Book VIII especially shows that author was well versed in classical literature, and while Maurice never explicitly says that he drew on Latin sources, he may

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are many reasons for this. Military culture tends to be conservative, and as mentioned above, even in civil contexts, Latin was the official language.

[275] A modern parallel is the use of certain French words in English military practice, e.g. "sound the Reveille." Rance, "The *De Militari Scientia* or Müller Fragment as a philological resource," 81-82, theorizes this as an origin of the word *ῥέκαλα.*

[276] Maur., *Strat.* 2.18. Veg., *Epit.* 3.5.4 reports the contemporary use of this battle-cry.

[277] Ibid., 1.6-8.

[278] Ibid., 3.5. Various attempts have been made to reconstitute the text. Cf. Dennis and Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, 152-155; Rance, "The *De Militari Scientia* or Müller Fragment as a philological resource," 91-92.

[279] Mihăescu, "Les éléments latins des 'Tactica Strategica' de Maurice-Urbicius et leur écho en néo-grec," 156.

[280] For example, Rance, "The *De Militari Scientia* or Müller Fragment as a philological resource," 76-79, discusses the peculiar appearance of *παλμάριον*, derived from the Latin adjective *palmarius*, a word which only appears in classical Latin in Ter., *Eun.* 930.

have known writers such as Frontinus and Vegetius.[281] Eutropius' subscription of 450 shows that Vegetius must have still been read in Constantinople in the fifth century. John Lydus lists "'Ρενᾶτος" as one of the Roman military writers, so he was at least aware of the *Epitoma*'s existence.[282] Moreover, based on the survival of a few fragments, we know that Greek translations of even Vegetius' *Mulomedicina* were circulated.[283] So what are we to make of overlaps in advice and attitude between Maurice and Vegetius? Outside of the *Γνωμικά*, there are no clear echoes of Latin military texts, but it is possible that some of Maurice's other material comes from Vegetius. For instance, Maurice suggests in *Strategikon* IX that all soldiers return to their tents in order to apprehend an enemy spy within the camp.[284] This echoes one of Vegetius' regulae: "when a spy of the enemy sneaks about your camp, all men should be ordered to return to their own tents in daylight, and the spy will immediately be caught."[285] This sort of overlap could be the result of common-sense military wisdom, independent invention, or a common source, but it also remains possible that Maurice knew this *regula* and decided to elaborate on the stratagem in his book on surprise attacks. In the end, we cannot know how familiar Maurice was with Vegetius' work,[286] but the appearance of Vegetian material in book 8,

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[281] Maurice never cites his sources; he simply refers to *οἱ ἀρχαῖοι* vel sim. Rance, "Tactics and *Tactica*," 86.

[282] Ioh. Lydus, *de Mag.* 1.47, "μάρτυρες Κέλσος τε καὶ Πάτερνος καὶ Κατιλίνας, οὐχ ὁ συνωμότης ἀλλ'ἕτερος, Κάτων <τε> πρὸ αὐτῶν ὁ πρῶτος καὶ Φροντῖνος, μεθ' οὓς καὶ Ῥενᾶτος, Ῥωμαῖοι πάντες." Milner, N.P., ed., trans., *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science,* 2nd edition (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), xxv. Nothing further is known about this Catiline.

[283] Reeve, "Notes on Vegetius," 207. Vincenzo Ortoleva, *La tradizione manoscritta della "*Mulomedicina*" di Publio Vegezio Renato* (Acireale: Editrice Sileno, 1996), 61-86.

[284] *Strat.* 9.5.

[285] Veg., *Epit.* 3.26.27, "cum explorator hostium latenter oberrat in castris, omnes ad tentoria sua per diem redire iubeantur, et statim deprehenditur explorator." This is one of the two *regulae* that has no explicit parallel in the rest of the *Epitoma.*

[286] Dain, "Les strategists Byzantins," 345, "On ne retrouve pas les sources de l'ouvrage, sauf pour le petit code de justice militaire, qui remonte évidemment au Code theodosien."

as well as an overlap in general outlook and specific recommendations, reflects the wider influence of classical texts and ideas on the *Strategikon*.

The Function of Maurice's *Γνωμικά*

Although *Strategikon* VIII's use of Latin source material is consistent with the intellectual and bureaucratic life of the sixth century, the role of the *regulae* is fundamentally different in both texts. Aside from theological and tactical adjustments to the Vegetian text, Maurice's most important change was in the presentation of the rules. Vegetius sought to produce a brief list that recapitulated many of the main themes of the *Epitoma* in a pithy and memorable way. The *regulae* are thematically integrated with the rest of the text, and they speak to a rhetorical purpose of conveying distilled information in a practical manner. On the other hand, Maurice appends two disjunctive lists of maxims, several of which are copied from Vegetius' *Epitoma*. The internal contradictions with the rest of the work and the repetitiveness of the two lists suggest haphazard composition. The intent was not a succinct transmission of military principles. Rather, Maurice appears to have wanted to imbue the reader with military wisdom by sheer weight of examples. Thus, he reappropriates Vegetius' more concise and practical *regulae* in forming a miscellaneous catalogue of ancient and contemporary military wisdom.

If one looks throughout the corpus of Byzantine military writings, this list of *γνωμικά* can be seen as part of a wider tradition of *apophthegmata*. The genre had its roots in antiquity. Cicero relates that a list of sayings of Cato was still extant in the first

century BC, and Quintilian also quotes from the sayings.[287] *Apophthegmata* also appear in Plutarch's *Moralia* under the headings of *Βασιλέων ἀποφθέγματα καὶ στρατηγών* (Sayings of Kings and Generals), *Ἀποφθέγματα Λακωνικά* (Spartan Sayings), and *Λακαινῶν αποφθέγματα* (Sayings of Spartan Women).[288] The practice seems to have flourished in the Second Sophistic, as *florilegia* became more popular.[289] In the sixth century intellectual environment of Constantinople, anthologies, at least of poetry, appear to have had something of a resurgence.[290] We know that a *Cycle of New Epigrams*, part of the *Palatine Anthology*, was composed by Agathias, a prominent historian and poet in the middle of the sixth century.[291] The *Anacreontea*, a collection of poems ranging from the first century BC to the sixth century AD pseudepigraphically attributed to Anacreon, may also date to the sixth century.[292]

In accordance with this flowering of anthologies, *apophthegmata* became popular in the military literature of the period. The *Codex Laurentianus* preserves a list of so-called *precepta de re militari*, the first of which corresponds closely to Vegetius 3.26.1.[293] In fact, the ninth century *Tactica of Leo VI* concludes with a book of maxims (*Περί διαφόρων γνωμικπῶν κεφαλαίων*) patterned on *Strategikon* VIII.[294] By looking to Leo's introduction to his own *apophthegmata*, we can deduce something of Maurice's purpose in appending *Strategikon* VIII. Leo explains:

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[287] Cicero, *De officiis* 1.104, "multaque multorum facete dicta, ut ea, quae a sene Catone collecta sunt, quae vocant ἀποφθέγματα." Cicero, *De officiis* 2.67.271. Quint., 6.3.105. Henry Jordan, ed., *M. Catonis Praeter Librum De Re Rustica Quae Extant* (Lipsiae: Teubner, 1860), 83.
[288] Plut., *Mor.* 3.15, 17, 18.
[289] e.g. Apul., *Flor*.
[290] Although Stobaeus continued to write in the genre of *florilegia* in the fifth century.
[291] e.g. *AP* 4.3. Alluded to at Agathias, *Hist.* praef. The *Suda* (s.v. *Ἀγαθίας*) gives the title *κύκλος τῶν νέων ἐπιγραμμάτων*. Paul the Silentiary, part of the same literary circle, made contributions as well.
[292] *AP*, gr. 23.
[293] *Codex Laurentianus*, folio 131. Cf. Carl Lang, ed., *Flavi Vegeti Renati Epitoma rei militaris* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1885), 120-121.
[294] Dennis, *The Taktika of Leo VI*, 536-619, notes corresponding passages.

> After the commands and the constitutions given above, O general, Your Excellency ought to familiarize yourself with the sayings presented here, which we have gathered from many ancient authorities and military treatises. We lay these before you as a way of summarizing what is written in this book. These will enable you to move on to greater applications of tactical theory. According to the wise king, compiler of proverbs (i.e. Solomon): a starting point given to a wise man results in his becoming more wise.[295]

The reference to the proverbs of Solomon links military maxims to the literature of religious wisdom.[296] Lists of sayings were perceived to be a serious form of writing, not a hastily jumbled together series of platitudes. In the case of Leo's maxims, we can tell how carefully wrought the list is not only due to its careful allusions to biblical and classical texts, but also because the 221 maxims form an acrostic.[297]

When compared to Leo's list of maxims, Maurice's *apophthegmata* appear to be characteristic of broader developments in Byzantine military literature. *Strategikon* VIII does not show the same amount of care that Leo's sayings do, but it does similarly draw on various classical sources. Their religious allusions underscore a belief that proverbs, even of a military nature, could make a man wiser, not just more knowledgeable. Lists of maxims, appended to more organized texts, lend the weight of ancient wisdom to what is otherwise a largely unembellished and practical contemporary work.

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[295] Leo, *Taktika* 20.1, "Μετὰ δὲ τὰς εἰρημένας παραγγελίας τε καὶ διατάξεις, ὦ στρατηγέ, χρεὸν τῇ σῇ ἐνδοξότητι καὶ ταῖς ἤδη ῥηθησομέναις ἐγκύψαι γνώμαις, ἃς ἐκ πολλῶν παλαιῶν καὶ στρατηγικῶν συνταγμάτων ἀναλεξάμενοι, συνόψεως χάριν τῶν εἰρημένων ἐνταῦθα παρατεθείκαμεν. ἐκ τούτων γὰρ καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς μείζονας πράξεις τῆς τακτικῆς θεωρίας ἀναβῆναι δυνήσῃ, κατὰ τὸν σοφὸν παροιμιαστὴν βασιλέα· σοφῷ γὰρ ἀνδρῖ ἀφορμὴ διδομένη σοφώτερον ἀπεργάζεται."

[296] Cf. Septuagint, Proverbs 1:5-6, "τῶνδε γὰρ ἀκούσας σοφὸς σοφώτερος ἔσται, ὁ δὲ νοήμων κυβέρνησιν κτήσεται, νοήσει τε παραβολὴν καὶ σκοτεινὸν λόγον ῥήσεις τε σοφῶν καὶ αἰνίγματα" ("For by hearing these proverbs, a wise man will be wiser, and the knowledgeable man will acquire guidance, and he will perceive parables and dark words, as well as the sayings and riddles of the wise.")

[297] The acrostic underscores the nexus between religious and military wisdom: "ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος τῆς ἁγίας καὶ ὁμοουσίου καὶ προσκυνητῆς τριάδος τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ μόνου ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν λέων ὁ εἰρηνικὸς ἐν χριστῶ αὐτοκράτωρ πιστὸς εὐσεβὴς εὐμενὴς ἀεισέβαστος αὔγουστος καὶ τοοθπννιοα [ἀλέξανδρος] βασιλεὺς ῥωμαίων." This acrostic was deciphered by J. Grosdidier de Matons "Trois etudes sur Léon VI," *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1973): 229-242. The nonsense word *τοοθπννιοα* was previously *ἀλέξανδρος*, the brother of Leo VI, but was changed by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus on account of the fact that Alexander had tried to have him castrated.

Regulae* as *Ἀποφθέγματα

Maurice's use of Vegetius' *regulae bellorum generales* reveals the influence that military literature, even from the West, continued to exert in Constantinople. It also demonstrates how Byzantine military thinkers could interact with ideas found in older texts. Maurice drew on Vegetius' *regulae* but still made changes to the language and presentation in order to suit a different historical and literary context. Nevertheless, his creative use of Vegetian material shows how the genre of technical military literature changed and continued to remain vibrant in Constantinople in the sixth and seventh centuries.

We cannot know whether *Strategikon* VIII was penned by Maurice himself or whether it was taken from an older collection of *apophthegmata*. Whoever first translated Vegetius into Greek transplanted what seems to have been intended as a summarizing list into an entirely different context. In doing so, the translator reappropriated a brief list of Latin rules to add to a treasury of ancient sayings. This is perhaps the most significant adjustment to the *regulae* of Vegetius. While their disappearance into a nameless list of proverbs may suggest haphazard composition or disregard for their original nuance, their appearance along with quotations of Plutarch, Polyaenus, Isocrates, and Homer enshrines Vegetius in the pantheon of military authors. If only more ancient military literature survived, we could more thoroughly understand the origin of the maxims in *Strategikon* VIII.

But we should not complain. It is due to the Byzantines that we now can read such a large corpus of ancient and medieval military writing. In the tenth century, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus ordered an encyclopedic collection of military

handbooks to be created. Of the many handbooks the Byzantine scholars collected, seven came from the ancient world and many more from the medieval period. When Constantinople fell in the fifteenth century, that collection of military writings found its way to Italy and the library of the Medici in Florence. By that point, Vegetius was already widely read in the west, and the time was ripe for the study of Greek military treatises.

CONCLUSION

The study of military handbooks is important because it provides insight into intellectual understandings of warfare in antiquity. A proper contextualization of the genre can help inform our reading of historiography, poetry, and philosophy. Technical military literature wrestled with more than the details of drill and maneuvers; it also dealt with some of the significant issues of the day: competing explanations of Rome's success, definitions of what it meant to be Roman, and notions of how the empire ought to be managed. Read in this way, the *Epitoma* becomes a far more interesting late-antique work. Vegetius' attitude toward good instruction and its influence on history is seen to be connected closely to his belief in the efficacy of didactic literature. It was by *disciplina* that Rome had won her empire, and through the handbook, the emperor could copy the same principles by which conquest had been achieved.

Vegetius' packaging of these values into *regulae* is consistent with the traditional use of lists in the context of military literature, and those same rules were reappropriated by Maurice in his *Strategikon*. This continuity speaks to the fact that lists of maxims remained an important element of ancient military life and literature. Even in the modern world, a sizeable market exists for books of quotations, trivia, and anecdotes. Reciting a line from Sun Tzu or quoting Patton has social currency; it allows a demonstration of one's knowledge to one's peers. At the same time, the memorization of a proverb or aphorism gives the speaker the confidence that he understands a nugget of wisdom. Likewise, in the ancient world, *ἀποφθέγματα* were prominent elements of elite culture.

The appearance of aphoristic lists in the *Epitoma* and *Strategikon* perhaps speaks to the conservative nature of military culture, a culture conducive to precepts, rules, and maxims.

As popular as the distillation of wisdom into pithy sayings can be, lists of maxims can be criticized for failing to encourage creativity or holistic thinking. Seneca, for instance, asks why one ought to learn the sayings of great men rather than looking at their whole works and thinking for oneself:

> Put away the hope that you are able to appreciate the wisdom of great men through abridgements. You should examine the whole. You should study the whole. The plan is carried out, and the work of genius is woven together line-by-line, from which nothing is able to be excerpted without collapse. I do not object to considering individual parts, so long as you examine them as the limbs of a man.[298]

Students of antiquity would do well to heed the words of Seneca. Too often works like the *Epitoma* and *Strategikon* are mined for purple passages and memorable precepts. Truly, Vegetius' *regulae bellorum generales* and their reception in Maurice's *Strategikon* reflects the popularity of aphorisms in ancient military literature, but their study must be underpinned by a proper understanding of the *Epitoma's* perspective and rhetorical purpose.

[298] Sen., *Ep.* 33.5, "Quare depone istam spem, posse te summatim degustare ingenia maximorum virorum; tota tibi inspicienda sunt, tota tractanda. Res geritur et per lineamenta sua ingenii opus nectitur, ex quo nihil subduci sine ruina potest. Nec recuso, quo minus singular membra, dummodo in ipso homine, consideres." Quint., *Inst.* 1.9.3, advocates their use in the training of young boys, not of men.

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