

# THE ENROLMENT OF THE *CAPITE CENSI* BY GAIUS MARIUS: A REAPPRAISAL

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Gaius Marius (157–86 BC) was one of the most innovative commanders of the Roman military. Between 107 BC and 101 BC Marius initiated five major reforms to the recruitment, equipment, deployment and training of the Roman legions. Marius' first alteration to the practices of the Roman military is perhaps the reform for which he is best known. His reform to the recruitment process of the Roman military in 107 BC permanently altered the demographic composition of the legions and, consequently, the very nature of the most fundamental aspects of the Roman military. Contrary to most modern theories on the subject, this reform was a radical departure from the standard practices of the Roman legions and had far reaching repercussions for the role of the Roman army. The results of this reform quickly became a permanent aspect of its organisation.

When Marius was given the command of the war against Jugurtha, king of Numidia, in 107 BC, he immediately raised a *supplementum*, a recruitment of additional troops and replacements to supplement the legions already campaigning in North Africa.<sup>1</sup> As part of this recruitment, Marius recalled many veterans back into service and called for volunteers from the *capite censi* (the head-count).<sup>2</sup> The *capite censi* consisted of those in possession of so minimal a level of property that they were entered on the census roll by 'head' rather than financial status and were not normally liable for military service except in the navy as rowers.<sup>3</sup> The opening of the legions to volunteers was a departure from the standard practice of only enlisting the propertied classes via the *dilectus*, an elaborate ceremony of lot drawing and selection to allocate officers and soldiers to the four consular legions which were raised each year from the tribes of Rome's populace.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sall. *Jug* 86.4.

<sup>2</sup> Sall. *Jug* 86.1-3.; Plut. *Mar* 9.

<sup>3</sup> Polyb. 6.19; Sall. *Jug* 86.1-3; Plut. *Mar* 9; Julius Exuperantius, *History*, 12-13. As later discussed, the Roman state had previously enrolled the poorer classes, freedmen and slaves into the legions during a time of crisis. However, no firm evidence exists that indicates this occurred between the end of the Second Punic War and Marius' reform of 107 BC. Some scholars take the speech of Tiberius Gracchus at Plut. *TG* 9 as evidence for a use of the non-propertied class in a large-scale military capacity prior to Marius' reform. However, the words of the speech stem from political polemic and its factual basis is somewhat suspect.

<sup>4</sup> Polyb. 6.19-21.

Service in the pre-Marian legions was largely conducted out of a sense of duty and loyalty to the state. During Rome's early history, soldiers were enrolled for a single campaigning season. These troops could then be called back into service as an *evocatus* for a total of sixteen years service up to the age of forty-six while maintaining their roles in society in the intervening periods.<sup>5</sup> During the Punic Wars, campaigning periods of several years became common. In the foreign wars of the second century BC, troops served for the duration of the campaign or until a six-year term of service had been served. Garrisons in provinces such as Spain or Macedonia were often discharged only when the commander saw fit.<sup>6</sup>

At the time of the Second Punic War, only those members of the populace whose net worth was above four thousand *asses* were liable to serve in the army.<sup>7</sup> Troops were drawn from the propertied classes as it was believed that those who held a vested interest in the protection of the state would perform more efficiently as soldiers.<sup>8</sup> Of those eligible, the troops were allocated to one of four different troop types according to age, physical fitness and the value of their property.

The youngest and poorest enlistees were assigned to the *velites*, or skirmishers. The next rank in the recruitment scale was assigned to the *hastati*, or medium infantry. Those in prime physical condition, and possessing suitable property, were allocated to the heavy infantry known as the *principes*; while older enlistees were assigned to the *triarii*, who were also heavy infantry.<sup>9</sup>

Following the expansion of Rome's domains in the third and second centuries BC, a vast number of captives and slaves were brought back as spoils. Many of these were employed as labourers on large rural estates (*latifundia*) and this created an increased number of dispossessed rural poor who, unable to continue tenure due to military service, lost control of their lands to these estates.<sup>10</sup> Several years service in the legions would have been

<sup>5</sup> Polyb. 6.19; see also P.A. Brunt, 'The Army and the Land in the Roman Revolution', *JRS* 52 (1962) 74; L. Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army* (London 1984) 33-34.

<sup>6</sup> J.W. Rich, 'The Supposed Roman Manpower Shortage in the Second Century BC', *Historia* 32 (1983) 289-290.

<sup>7</sup> Polyb. 6.11, 6.19. See also E. Gabba, *Republican Rome. the Army and the Allies* (Oxford 1976) 5-6.

<sup>8</sup> Plut. *Mar.* 9; Julius Exuperantius *History* 12-13.

<sup>9</sup> Polyb. 6.22-23.

<sup>10</sup> App. *B Civ.* 1.7; see also R.E. Smith, *Service in the Post-Marian Roman Army* (Manchester 1958) 7-8; M. Grant, *The World of Rome* (London 1960) 109; Brunt (n 5) 75; A.J. Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy. The Hannibalic War's Effects on Roman Life* Vol. II (London 1965).

enough to ruin a small farmer and they would have had little hope of obtaining continuous, remunerative, employment elsewhere once they were discharged from their military service.<sup>11</sup> Both Appian and Plutarch imply that those who lost their lands were still eligible for enlistment.<sup>12</sup> Rich theorises that many of these rural poor, while unemployed, would still have retained sufficient domestic property, such as a small house, to qualify for enlistment in the legions at the lower levels.<sup>13</sup> Whatever the case, the loss of a rural livelihood for many would result in a large rise in seasonal unemployment. This level of unemployment forms the basis for several theories concerning Marius' enrolment of the *capite censi*. However, the following reappraisal of these theories leads to the conclusion that the motivation behind Marius' reform was vastly different from that proposed in the currently accepted models.

Some scholars suggest that the removal of the property requirements for enlistment was not a radical reform but was the culmination of a process that had been at work for centuries. They propose that the minimum property requirement for military service had been gradually reduced from eleven thousand *asses* in the sixth century BC to one thousand five hundred *asses* by the second century BC to allow recruitment from a broader base of propertied manpower during Rome's wars of expansion.<sup>14</sup> The Roman state was not averse to the recruitment of the less-propertied classes and had enrolled volunteers, the *capite censi*, freedmen and even slaves to serve in a military capacity in the past if the manpower requirements of the state necessitated their usage.<sup>15</sup> This is clearly illustrated in the enrolment of six thousand slaves to form a supplementary legion after the Roman defeat at Cannae in 216 BC.<sup>16</sup> The acceptance of volunteers into the army, and the disregard of

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296-312; K D. White, 'Latifundia', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 14 (1967) 62-79; H.H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero* (London 1976) 19-22; P. Garnsey and R. Saller, *The Roman Empire. Economy, Society and Culture* (London 1987) 66-71; A. Santosuosso, *Storming the Heavens* (London 2004) 1. For a critique of Toynbee, see E. Badian, 'Tiberius Gracchus and the Beginnings of the Roman Revolution', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 1 1 (1972) 668-731, esp. 670-673.

<sup>11</sup> Brunt (n.5) 75; Santosuosso (n.10) 1.

<sup>12</sup> App. *B Civ.* 1.7; Plut. *Ti Gracch* 9.

<sup>13</sup> Rich (n.6) 298-299. See also Toynbee (n.10) 305.

<sup>14</sup> Smith (n.10) 4-10; Gabba (n.7) 1-19; J. Warry, *Warfare in the Classical World* (Norman 1980) 133; Keppie (n.5) 61; S. Yalichev, *Mercenaries of the Ancient World* (London 1997) 238; A. Goldsworthy, *In the Name of Rome* (London 2004) 137; Santosuosso (n.10) 10-11. See also M.H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* Vol. II (Cambridge 1974) 625.

<sup>15</sup> Livy 22.11, 42-34; Plut. *Fab.* 26; App. *Hispan* 84; see also Rich (n.6) 290 on the possibility that the proletariat was enlisted during the Pyrrhic War.

<sup>16</sup> Livy 22.57.

the property requirements by Marius, is seen by many as the next evolutionary step in this process rather than a reshaping of it.<sup>17</sup>

Rich, however, following a lengthy examination of the available data relating to military service, social status, electoral registration and legal constraints (summarised in the following Table), claims that we do not possess satisfactory evidence for an actual reduction in the property qualifications for enlistment. Rich concludes that while re-tariffing and inflationary forces will have played a role in the development of financial classifications, the discrepancies in the ancient sources cannot be satisfactorily resolved.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, in terms of eligibility for military service, the first to fourth class qualification levels appear to have remained relatively unaltered from the sixth century BC to the first century AD (despite any of the re-tariffing or inflation that Rich would suggest). It is only the fifth class qualification level which is altered (see Table below). If, as some argue, the varying levels for the fifth class indicate a reduction in Roman manpower, then it can only be a reduction of those of the lowest class who were eligible to serve as *velites*. There must have still been sufficient numbers to fill any levy of the first to fourth classes to warrant the retention of the property qualifications for these classes. The altered level for the fifth class may be a reflection of the loss of rural livelihood and property to the *latifundia* by the rural poor. This would account for a reduction of the fifth class qualification level, as the numbers of rural dispossessed correspondingly increased, and the retention of the upper class levels to accommodate the wealthier, estate owning, classes whose numbers did not diminish.

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<sup>17</sup> Smith (n.10) 8-10; M. Grant, *The Army of the Caesars* (New York 1974) 4; H. Last, 'Marius the General', in D. Kagan, *Problems in Ancient History Vol. II The Roman World* (New York 1975) 228; Warry (n.14) 133; Keppic (n.5) 61; Yalichev (n.14) 238; L. Adkins and R.A. Adkins, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome* (Oxford 1998) 52, 82; P. Connolly, *Greece and Rome at War* (London 1998) 214; J.F.C. Fuller, *Julius Caesar: Man, Soldier and Tyrant* (Hertfordshire 1998) 26; G. Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries AD* (Norman 1998) 19; N. Rosenstein, 'Republican Rome', in K. Raaflaub and N. Rosenstein (eds), *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Cambridge 1999) 208-209; A. Goldsworthy, *The Complete Roman Army* (London 2003) 47; Santosuosso (n.10) 10

<sup>18</sup> Rich (n.6) 305-316. Rich suspects that errors on the part of the authors or by later scribes may account for some of these discrepancies. However, it is no easy task to determine which, if any, part of the texts have been so corrupted. For the re-valuing and re-weighting of Roman currency during this period, see Crawford (n.14) 614-615, 621-625. See also Gabba (n.7) 2-12.

TABLE: A Re-examination of the Property Qualification Levels from the Sixth Century BC to the First Century AD

Ancient Source <sup>19</sup>	Qualification Level/Class <sup>20</sup>	Comments <sup>21</sup>
Livy	1st 100,000 <i>asses</i> 2nd 75,000 <i>asses</i> 3rd 50,000 <i>asses</i> 4th 25,000 <i>asses</i> 5th 11,000 <i>asses</i>	Purports to describe the property qualification levels under Servius Tullius (578 BC-534 BC)
Dionysius	1st 100,000 <i>asses</i> 2nd 75,000 <i>asses</i> 3rd 50,000 <i>asses</i> 4th 25,000 <i>asses</i> 5th 12,500 <i>asses</i>	Purports to describe the levels under Servius Tullius. Converted from <i>minae</i> at a rate of 1 <i>mina</i> = 1,000 <i>asses</i> . The difference in the 5th class figure from that of Livy may be an error or supposition from simply halving the 4th class figure
Polybius	1st 100,000 <i>asses</i> 5th 4,000 <i>asses</i>	May describe the levels during the Second Punic War (c. 216 BC). Converted from <i>drachmae</i> at a rate of 1 Attic-Alexandrian <i>drachma</i> = 10 <i>asses</i> . The lower 5th class figure is seen by many as an indication of a reduction in the property qualification levels, and Rich suggests that this figure represents a re-weighting of the currency. This, however, does not explain why the property qualification for the first class (as given above by Livy and Dionysius) remains the same.
Gellius	1st 125,000 <i>asses</i> 5th 1,500 <i>asses</i> 375 <i>asses</i>	Gellius may share a common source with Pliny and Festus. Gellius states that any person possessing property below 125,000 <i>asses</i> (i.e., who did not qualify for the first class census level) was classified as <i>infra classem</i> . Gellius also separates the <i>proletarii</i> (at 1,500 <i>asses</i> ) from the <i>capite censi</i> (at 375 <i>asses</i> ). The difference in the 1 <sup>st</sup> class figures of Gellius, Pliny and Festus may be the product of a scribal error in Gellius.
Pliny	1st 120,000 <i>asses</i>	Pliny may share a common source with Gellius and Festus. Pliny gives a level of 120,000 <i>asses</i> for the 1st class census (not enlistment) levels under Servius Tullius. The figure for enlistment qualification may have been lower, possibly 100,000 <i>asses</i> . The difference with Gellius' figure is possibly due to a scribal error in Gellius.
Festus	1st 120,000 <i>asses</i>	Festus may share a common source with Gellius and Pliny. Festus states that the <i>infra classem</i> were those in possession of less than 120,000 <i>asses</i> in property. As with the case of Pliny's figure, if this figure is for the census and not enlistment, then the enlistment qualification figure may be lower, possibly 100,000 <i>asses</i> . The difference with Gellius' figure is possibly due to a scribal error in Gellius.
Gaius	1st(?)100,000 <i>asses</i>	This is an exemption level for the <i>lex Voconia</i> of 169 BC which prohibits those who possess a certain level of property from having female heirs and may be indicative of the 1st class census/qualification level.
Cassius Dio	1st 100,000 <i>sestertii</i>	This figure is for <i>lex Voconia</i> exemptions. Crawford claims a 1:1 replacement of the <i>as</i> by the <i>sestertius</i> c. 141 BC with 1 <i>drachma/denarius</i> = 10 <i>asses/sestertii</i> .
Pseudo-Asconius	1st 100,000 <i>sestertii</i>	This figure implicitly also refers to <i>lex Voconia</i> exemptions.
Cicero	5th 1,500 <i>asses</i>	Purports to describe the centuriate system under Servius Tullius but may reflect the late second/mid-first century situation.
Nonius	5th 1,500 <i>asses</i>	States that the <i>proletarii</i> were those worth less than 1,500 <i>asses</i> .

<sup>19</sup> Livy 1 43; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4 16-18; Polyb. 6 19, 6.23; Gell. *NA* 6.13 1, 16 10.10; Plin. *HN* 33 43; Festus, *De Verborum Significatione* p 100L, s.v. 'infra classem'; Gaius, *Inst.* 2 274; Cass. Dio 56 10 2; Cic. *Rep.* 2 40; Pseudo-Asconius, 247St and Nonius 228L. See Rich (n.6) 307-308

<sup>20</sup> Livy and Dionysius are the only sources to reference the qualification levels for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th classes.

<sup>21</sup> Based on interpretation of the ancient data and a re-examination of the conclusions given by G.V. Sumner, 'The Legion and the Centuriate Organization', *JRS* (1970) 73-74, 76; Crawford (n.14) 621-625; Gabba (n.7) 2-12 and Rich (n.6) 305-316. On the Servian era class system, see A.H.J. Greenidge, *Roman Public Life* (London 1901) 65-73

No ancient source actually states that the figures it provides reflect a reduction in the property qualifications and modern convention appears to be based upon a comparison of different figures for the fifth class, as given by different authors, at different time periods. However, these figures are so open to doubt that any alteration to the property qualifications cannot be confirmed. What is of interest is that the figures for the other classes (the first class at least as indicated by the literary evidence) remain relatively constant. If there was no overall reduction to the property qualifications except for those for the fifth class, then the complete disregard of all of the property qualifications by Marius seems unlikely to have been the next logical step in the process as some assert. The most likely 'next step' would have been something like the retention of the first to fourth class levels for recruitment and the abandonment of the fifth class level with the opening of the legions to volunteers in this category only. Marius' enrolment of the *capite censi* must therefore now be considered a major reform rather than an act to abolish a system of enlistment which had been in decline as some hypotheses suggest; the fact is that property levels for service by the higher classes were not decreasing. The re-examination of the available evidence indicates that the reason for Marius' reform was something other than is suggested by current convention, namely a lack of *willing* manpower across all classes.

Evans, drawing from a passage in Sallust, states that Marius enrolled the *capite censi* as he had promised to bring a rapid end to the Numidian campaign through a speedier method of recruitment.<sup>22</sup> This hypothesis can be easily dismissed. The amount of time required to equip and train those drawn from the lower classes into an effective body of fighting men would be similar, if not longer, than the time required to train recruits drawn from the propertied classes who may have had previous military experience. Therefore, the desire for an expedient end to the African campaign cannot have been Marius' motivation for the enrolment of the *capite censi*.

It has also been hypothesised that legislation, such as that of the Gracchi, was indicative of a shortage of Roman manpower.<sup>23</sup> The Gracchi, through their legislation, wished to distribute land from the *ager publicus* to the poor.<sup>24</sup> While the exact motive for this proposal is not stated in any ancient source, an increase in the propertied class, and therefore those eligible for military

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<sup>22</sup> Sall. *Iug.* 44 5-6; see also R.J. Evans, *Gaius Marius. A Political Biography* (Pretoria 1994) 75

<sup>23</sup> Grant (n 10) 6; H.M.D. Parker, *The Roman Legions* (New York 1971) 22; Last (n 17) 228; Rich (n 6) 300; Keppie (n 5) 58; Webster (n 17) 18; Goldsworthy (n 14) 125, 138-139; Santosuosso (n.10) 11.

<sup>24</sup> Plut. *Ti Gracch* 8-9; Plut. *C. Gracch* 5.

service, would be one result. This, however, in no way confirms that the numbers of propertied poor were diminishing. It seems unlikely that the poorer classes would embrace such a reform if it made them liable for military service and it may have only been those who were willing to serve anyway who supported the proposal.<sup>25</sup>

The proposals that Marius' motivation to accept volunteers from the *capite censi* was a gratuity for the allocation of his command by the *comitia*; to raise his popularity among the poorer classes; to spite the senatorial class; or because he himself was a 'new man' are similarly unlikely, even though some of these hypotheses are based upon interpretations of passages in ancient texts.<sup>26</sup> There would have been better ways for an elected consul to achieve these outcomes. Proposals such as grain subsidies or land grants would benefit all members of the populace, and increase Marius' popularity with the lower classes, regardless of age or gender.<sup>27</sup> Accepting volunteers into the military only benefited men of a suitable age by providing access to a hazardous, short term, profession. Therefore the opportunity to grant a gratuity to the populace also seems an unlikely reason for Marius' enrolment of volunteers as it only benefited those who were willing to serve in the legions.

Taken one at a time, these proposed motives seem implausible as the impetus behind Marius' reform. Even considered as a combined package of motives, their outcomes do not appear to outweigh the political risks which Marius would have been undertaking. Furthermore, the ability to foresee any or all of these potential outcomes from a single reform would indicate the ability of a shrewd politician. However, Marius appears to have been a soldier first and a politician second. He was elected to the majority of his consulships as an extension of military commands rather than on the basis of political acumen or campaigning. His military reforms were a result of these commands and are contrasted by the lack of major civilian, urban or social reforms during his terms in office. This suggests that Marius' military reform was due to more practical motivations.

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<sup>25</sup> Rich (n 6) 318-319

<sup>26</sup> Sall. *Iug.* 86 3: "Some say that he did this through lack of good men, others because of a desire to curry favour, since that class had given him honour and rank. As a matter of fact, to one who aspires to power the poorest man is the most helpful, since he has no regard for his property, having none, and considers anything honourable for which he receives pay"; cf. Julius Exuperantius, *History*, 9. On spite, see Webster (n 17) 19-20; Warry (n 14) 133. On popularity, see Santosuosso (n.10) 14; Rich (n 6) 325-326; Gabba (n 7) 14

<sup>27</sup> Although it might be pointed out that Plut. *Mar.* 4 shows that Marius was against the subsidy of grain

The meagre pay for military service was supplemented by spoils and donatives.<sup>28</sup> Campaigns which held the promise of rich plunder appeared quite lucrative to enlistees.<sup>29</sup> But as the length of campaigns increased in the second century BC, and with it time away from home or farm, campaigns which held little promise of spoils became less attractive for those eligible for service. Campaigns in the Spanish provinces in the second century BC appear to have been particularly unattractive and some of those eligible refused to serve.<sup>30</sup>

Campaigning in North Africa is likely to have been less attractive than in other, possibly wealthier, regions. Carthage had been razed in 146 BC and the current campaign had already been prosecuted for four years with little success.<sup>31</sup> Sallust mentions the frequented Numidian emporium city of Vaga, where many Italians had settled, but provides no details of the prosperity of the region.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Sallust's statement that those who volunteered for the Numidian campaign envisaged themselves returning "rich with spoils or as a victor" also contains no detail of the prosperity of the region and may simply be a comment that the volunteers were confident of victory, and may have expected spoils, but may not have fully understood the theatre in which they were about to operate.<sup>33</sup> However, even if the region was wealthy, spoils could only be gained through successful campaigning; the legions had seen little of this in the preceding four years.

With no clear end to the conflict in sight, and the only prospects being those of a long campaign in a foreign territory with little opportunity for enrichment, there would have been little incentive to serve. Consequently, as in the previous Spanish campaigns, many in the propertied class may have been reluctant to perform their military duty. This meant that, in effect, there was not a shortage of propertied manpower as some assert but there was a shortage of *willing* manpower. Sallust's statement that there was a lack of "men of a better kind" may be a reference to the sentiment of those unwilling to campaign in North Africa.<sup>34</sup> This may also account for the themes which Sallust gives to Marius' pre-enrolment orations which are anti-senatorial,

<sup>28</sup> Polyb. 6.19; see also F E. Adcock, *The Roman Art of War* (Cambridge 1940) 20; Brunt (n 5) 77-79

<sup>29</sup> Livy 42 32; App. *Pun.* 75

<sup>30</sup> Spanish spoils: Livy 23 48; App. *Hisp.* 54; unwillingness to serve: Polyb 35 1-4; Plin. *HN* 33 141; Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 8.3

<sup>31</sup> Razing of Carthage: Livy 44 44, *Per.* 51; Cass. Dio 21 30; war in Numidia: Sall. *Iug.* 27.1-83.3

<sup>32</sup> Sall. *Iug.* 47.1

<sup>33</sup> Sall. *Iug.* 84.4

<sup>34</sup> Sall. *Iug.* 84.1-2

derisive of the propertied classes and use the 'promise' of booty and glory as an incentive to join the impending campaign.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, a reform to circumvent a reluctance by the propertied classes to serve would account for Marius' disregard of the property qualifications for enlistment and his acceptance of volunteers into the legions.

Politically, the effects of the enrolment of the *capite censi* were immense and have been a dominant focus of work by later scholars. Drawn from lower socio-economic classes, the members of the volunteer legions had little or no livelihood to return to once their term of service was completed. They had effectively joined the military as a means of escaping from an impoverished lifestyle.<sup>36</sup> This caused an alteration in the sense of duty and loyalty to the state inherent in the pre-Marian soldier. Service for many was now conducted out of a sense of personal economic survival. This shifted the legionnaire's loyalty in the period after Marius' reform away from the state to commanders who brought them success and continued, profitable, service regardless of foe or cause.<sup>37</sup>

As a result, the military became a political tool for ambitious commanders aspiring to a higher station. Marius' unprecedented five consecutive consulships, contrary to the *cursus honorum*, ushered in a turbulent period of political change centred on the military.<sup>38</sup> Successful generals would now be made into consuls instead of elected consuls taking command of armies when a military need arose.<sup>39</sup> The need for military success to obtain or retain political position is well established.<sup>40</sup> During the civil wars which engulfed the empire following the opening of the legions to volunteers many generals marched against Rome. Troops remained loyal to insurgent commanders as their opponents provided little incentive to switch loyalties back to the state.<sup>41</sup> As a result, the role of the army changed in this period from that of defender of the state to one which either destroyed or maintained the status quo depending upon the political ambition of the commander and the will of the

<sup>35</sup> Sall *Iug* 85.1-47.

<sup>36</sup> Last (n 17) 229-230; Adcock (n 28) 20; R. MacMullen, 'The Legion as Society', *Historia* 33 (1984) 441.

<sup>37</sup> Lucan 5.240-248; App. *B Civ* 2 77; see also Brunt (n 5) 75; I. Carney, *A Biography of Gaius Marius* (Chicago 1970) 33; J A Barthelmeß, *The Sullan Senate and the Army* (Ann Arbor 1975) 34.

<sup>38</sup> *Cursus Honorum*: T.P. Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate 139 BC-AD 14* (Oxford 1971) 153-169; Adkins and Adkins (n 17) 41.

<sup>39</sup> Sall *Iug*, 85 10-11, 114 3-4; Vell. Pat. 2.12 3; Plut. *Pomp* 22; Plut. *Mar* 14; Plut. *Sull* 5-6; App. *B Civ* 1 40, 1 55.

<sup>40</sup> On the requirement and use of military success by junior magistrates for advancement, see Wiseman (n 38) 121-122, 143-147, 176-178.

<sup>41</sup> App. *B Civ* 1 87-88.

legions themselves. The use of the military to support political agendas culminated in the rise of Octavian and the eventual establishment of the Principate.<sup>42</sup>

The opening of the army to volunteers also had other socio-political ramifications. Allowing the *capite censi* to serve in the legions would have reduced the level of unemployment in the short term but opened the long running dispute over whether to provide land grants upon discharge.<sup>43</sup> It was not common for the propertied pre-Marian soldier to receive an allotment of public land as a gratuity.<sup>44</sup> Throughout the period of political debate and counter-debate in the Late Republic, some veterans were given *virittane* or colonial allotments but land grants upon retirement would not become a common practice until the Principate.<sup>45</sup>

Militarily, the main impact of the enrolment of the *capite censi* was measured in manpower. By recalling veterans and allowing volunteers into the legions, Marius was able to return to North Africa with a force larger than the *supplementum* he was authorised to enrol.<sup>46</sup> Importantly, this enrolment did not alter the basic terms of service for the legionnaire nor remove the *dilectus* as a means of recruitment.<sup>47</sup> However, volunteers would be willing to serve longer, due to any potential remunerative gains to be made from campaigning, thus making an annual recruitment via the *dilectus* unnecessary. The infrequent mention of the *dilectus* in ancient sources recounting events after 107 BC suggests that this procedure was either frequently abandoned as a standard method of recruitment or in many cases was simply no longer required.<sup>48</sup> Once volunteers began to be accepted into the legions it would have been almost impossible to revert exclusively to the previous method of recruitment. It is possible that both methods of recruitment were in operation concurrently for a period of time until the enlistment of volunteers became the standard practice of the army.

<sup>42</sup> Cic. *Att.* 16.9; Cic. *Fam.* 7.5, 9.7, 10.12, 10.21, 10.23, 10.30, 10.34; Cic. *Brut.* 7, 10, 24; App. *B Civ.* 3.40; see also Grant (n.17) 5.

<sup>43</sup> Plut. *Mar.* 29-30; R.E. Smith, *Failure of the Roman Republic* (London 1955) 102-103; Brunt (n.5) 69-71; Gabba (n.7) 11.

<sup>44</sup> App. *B Civ.* 2.140; see also Adcock (n.28) 20; Raaflaub and Rosenstein (n.17) 209.

<sup>45</sup> Augustus *Res Gestae* 3.3; Tac. *Ann.* 1.17; App. *B Civ.* 1.29, 1.100, 2.133, 3.12, 5.5, 5.12; see also Brunt (n.5) 69-86; Gabba (n.7) 17; Keppie (n.5) 62-63; D. Williams, *The Reach of Rome* (London 1996) 3.

<sup>46</sup> Sall. *Jug.* 86.4.

<sup>47</sup> Smith (n.10) 44; Keppie (n.5) 62.

<sup>48</sup> Cicero, for example, refers to two separate post-Marian uses of the *dilectus*: *Fam.* 12.5 and *Mur.* 42. Granius Licinianus (33.25-26) states that Rutilius Rufus prohibited all *imores* from leaving Italy in 105 BC due to the German threat but the method of recruitment for any troops raised is not mentioned; see also Keppie (n.5) 61-62.

Volunteers would also be more able and willing to serve in extended foreign campaigns and this allowed Marius to prosecute the war in Numidia predominantly at his own pace. This is evidenced by Marius' actions during the first year of his command. Instead of seeking a quick decisive encounter, which had given little success to previous commanders, Marius engaged in minor skirmishes and besieged lightly fortified settlements to hone his new recruits into an effective fighting force and integrate the new volunteers into the legions.<sup>49</sup> Willing volunteers who could campaign for protracted periods of time, and could therefore be extensively trained, would also be utilised for Marius' German campaigns.

After being given the command of the Northern campaign in 104 BC, Marius took control of the legions trained by Publius Rutilius Rufus, the consul for the previous year, in preference to those which had previously served under Metellus and himself in North Africa.<sup>50</sup> There is no mention of those enrolled from the *capite censi* being disbanded so Marius may have retained these units. Plutarch states that Marius' new troops were in need of training.<sup>51</sup> This passage may be a reference to either an intake of supplementary troops or to further training necessitated by the implementation of more of Marius' reforms (see following discussion). As there is no mention of the *dilectus* being used as a procedure for enrolment, this suggests that any additional troops raised may have come from volunteers.<sup>52</sup> Similar to the Numidian campaign, Marius was able to take substantial time training his men before marching northward.

Both Rich and Evans, however, claim that the enrolment of the *capite censi* was a singular event and that fewer than five thousand men were ever enrolled from the lower classes for both the Numidian and German campaigns.<sup>53</sup> However, this hypothesis raises several problems. If the army in 104 BC was still predominantly short-serving militia drawn from the propertied classes, this does not account for much of what followed. An army drawn primarily from the propertied classes would not require some of Marius' reforms such as the adoption of the *aquila* as the sole insignia of the legions. According to Pliny (*HN* 10 16) in Marius' second consulship (104 BC) he abolished the use of wolves, horses, minotaurs and boars as standards, retaining only the eagle (*aquila*) as the dominant identifying

<sup>49</sup> Sall. *Jug.* 67 1-92 4.

<sup>50</sup> Frontin. *Str.* 4 2.2

<sup>51</sup> Plut. *Mar.* 13-14

<sup>52</sup> Pseudo Quintilian (*Decl.* 3 5) claims that Marius' reform happened in conjunction with the German campaign and not in 107 BC (see Gabba [n.7] 13). This may be a reference to a second intake of volunteers. Gabba believes this date is 'wilfully invented'

<sup>53</sup> Rich (n 6) 287-331; Evans (n 22) 75.

emblem of the whole legion. The former had been indicative of the four ranks of the pre-Marian maniple: the *velites*, the *principes*, the *hastati* and the *triarii*. The eagle as the sole insignia of the legion would provide a point of focus for recruits drawn from many different social strata and help to combine them into one cohesive unit. Additionally, by tying the loyalty of the recruits to the eagle, Marius fostered a sense of loyalty to the legion which to some extent replaced the loyalty to the state that was inherent in the propertied pre-Marian soldier. Moreover, if the army still retained primarily propertied individuals, as Rich and Evans argue, there would not have been the political debates which ensued over land grants for veterans. These later developments and the time taken by Marius to train the legions for the Northern campaign, suggest that the army Marius marched northward can only have been comprised of a majority of willing volunteer recruits enrolled from the *capite censi*.

Previous scholarship also suggests that the poverty of the *capite censi* necessitated the uniform equipping of the legions at state expense; with some commentators stating that this was introduced through the *lex militaris* of Gaius Gracchus.<sup>54</sup> However, the Gracchan legislation makes no mention of supplying arms and armour to troops at the cost of the state but only mentions an attempt to provide *clothing* and *rations*.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, two passages from Polybius' *Histories* suggest that the pre-Marian army was partially equipped by the state. Those selected by the *dilectus* were required to assemble "without arms", suggesting that at least some equipment was issued upon assembly.<sup>56</sup> Polybius also states that the cost of additional arms and equipment was deducted from the soldier's pay.<sup>57</sup> This suggests that those who were serving for the first time, and would therefore not be in possession of their own arms and armour, could have it supplied by the state and then pay it off in instalments. The soldier would then be able to retain his equipment and so be able to provide his own arms if he was mustered again at a later date. The issue of equipment is corroborated by Plutarch who also states that the pre-Marian soldier was "given arms".<sup>58</sup> The financial levels which designated class within the *dilectus* may therefore be a reflection of what the individual could afford to repay as opposed to what he could purchase outright for service. The deduction of the cost of arms continued into the Principate as complaints by soldiers during the reign of Tiberius

<sup>54</sup> Last (n 17) 228; Gabba (n.7) 6-7; Keppie (n 5) 58-61; Adkins and Adkins (n.17) 52; Goldsworthy (n 14) 140; N V. Sekunda, S Northwood and M. Simkins, *Caesar's Legions. The Roman Soldier 753 BC to 117 AD* (Oxford 2003) 56; Santosuosso (n 10) 13-14.

<sup>55</sup> Plut. *C. Gracch.* 5.

<sup>56</sup> Polyb. 6.21

<sup>57</sup> Polyb. 6.39

<sup>58</sup> Plut. *Mar.* 9

clearly illustrate.<sup>59</sup> If this process was in place before and after the time of Marius, then it is reasonable to conclude that the volunteer legions of 107 BC were also initially provided with their arms and armour for which they would pay through wage deductions

This brings into question one of the fundamental academic assumptions concerning the results of the 'head-count' reform. If pre-Marian soldiers, whether they were members of the *velites*, *hastati*, *principes* or *triarii*, were initially provided with their equipment by the state, why were the troops of Marius equipped uniformly? Clearly the infrastructure was already in place to equip soldiers with the different forms of accoutrements required for the four ranks of the old manipular system. This certainly would have been the case for the six thousand slaves recruited into the legions after the Roman defeat at Cannae in 216 BC. Passages in Sallust's accounts of Marius' campaigns in 106 BC illustrate the presence of troops equipped in the manipular fashion one year after Marius' enrolment of the *capite censi*, indicating that the uniformity of equipment was not made in conjunction with this reform.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, uniform equipping could only have been a conscious decision made by Marius due to another of his reforms made later in 104 BC: the adoption of the cohort as the basic tactical unit of the Roman army and the replacement of the manipular system.

Sekunda and others believe that the simple uniform style helmet dated to the time of Caesar is indicative of mass production resulting from the 'head-count' reform and equipping at the cost of the state.<sup>61</sup> However, this type of mass production is in no way confirmation of supply at state expense. Arms may still have been provided to the troops on mustering with the cost deducted from their pay as per Polybius' description. The theory of equipping at state expense has no confirmatory basis in the ancient written record. This mass-produced helmet may be more indicative of the uniformity of equipment from Marius' reforms of 104 BC than of equipment at state expense.

By allowing volunteers into the legions, the Roman military gained access to an unprecedented level of available and willing manpower and set the foundation for what were to become the 'standing armies' of the Late Republic and the Principate, comprised of men who had chosen a military lifestyle.<sup>62</sup> With the conclusion of the Social War in 89 BC there was no

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<sup>59</sup> Tac. *Ann* 1.17.

<sup>60</sup> Sall *Jug* 100.2, 103.1.

<sup>61</sup> Sekunda et al. (n.54) 56, 113

<sup>62</sup> Smith (n 10) 11

longer a distinction between 'Roman' and 'ally' and the number of citizens now eligible for service as volunteers greatly increased.<sup>63</sup> This would mean that the *dilectus* would not be required as a means of recruitment (although it was still occasionally used). Rich claims that the Social War can be viewed as the turning point for volunteer enlistment.<sup>64</sup> However, the foundation of this practice can be clearly seen in Marius' preparations for the Numidian and German campaigns. It was the new ease of recruitment and the ability to place larger armies in the field for longer periods of time which allowed Rome to expand its empire into Gaul and the Near East, and maintain control of internal disturbances such as slave revolts and piracy on the Mediterranean in the decades prior to the Principate.<sup>65</sup> By the time of Caesar, the nature of recruitment had altered so much that it was possible to enlist legions of non-Italians directly from the provinces.<sup>66</sup> Epigraphic evidence from military tombstones of the second to fourth centuries AD indicates the continuance of this practice, although it does not confirm the universal adoption of it.<sup>67</sup> The volunteer nature of these legions is evident from Caesar's ten-year campaign in Gaul. Ten-years' continuous service was longer than the normal term of service for a Roman soldier. Therefore, many of Caesar's longer serving troops, such as those in the Tenth Legion, must have been volunteers enlisted in a professional capacity.<sup>68</sup> Epigraphic evidence also demonstrates that during the Empire some soldiers were serving for several decades.<sup>69</sup> The territorial expansion due to the new structure of the army gave Rome access to riches, tribute, slaves and resources which could be used to offset the expense carried by the State for initially equipping and training the new volunteer legions.

The conclusion of the Social War and the new ease of recruitment also increased the problems faced by the State. The army which marched on Rome with Sulla in 88 BC, for example, would have contained men from both sides of the Social War, many of whom would have held no previous allegiance to Rome and were now singularly devoted to their commander. The opening of the legions to volunteers allowed both sides in the succeeding civil wars to raise private armies from among clients and the newly enfranchised states while appearing to be adhering to some semblance of the

<sup>63</sup> App. *B Civ.* 1.53; see also Keppie (n 5) 69-70; Webster (n 17) 22  
<sup>64</sup> Rich (n 6) 329

<sup>65</sup> Concurrent campaigns: App. *B Civ.* 1.111; Gaul: Plut. *Caes.* 18-27; Near East: Plut. *Pomp.* 30-45; slave revolts: Plut. *Crass.* 8-11; App. *B Civ.* 1.116-120; piracy: Plut. *Pomp.* 24-30  
<sup>66</sup> *Cacs. B Gall.* 1.7; Suet. *Iul.* 24; Plut. *Caes.* 12.

<sup>67</sup> *CIL* VII.49, *CIL* VII.51, *CIL* VII.66, *CIL* VII.68 and *CIL* VII.1054

<sup>68</sup> App. *B Civ.* 2.66, 2.93-94.

<sup>69</sup> *CIL* VII.1058, *EE* IX.1068, *EE* IX.1375; cf. App. *B Civ.* 5.3

conventions of the state.<sup>70</sup> The problematic issue of maintaining the loyalty of the army to the state would continue through the civil wars of the Late Republic until the reforms of Octavian after 31 BC, which disbanded many of the volunteer legions into colonies, posted those that remained to provincial frontiers and placed the responsibility of paying the legions solely in the hands of the commander (scilicet Octavian soon to be Augustus).<sup>71</sup> The defensive strategies of Augustus, which utilised the standing armies on the frontiers, were the first steps in securing stable imperial boundaries and would not have been possible without the professional army created by Marius' reform of 107 BC.<sup>72</sup>

Marius' 'head-count' reform has been the predominant focus of later military and political commentators due to the immense impact that it had on shaping Rome's political system. At the time of its inception, Marius' reform to allow volunteers into the legions provided the Roman state with a large base of willing manpower for the Numidian and German campaigns. Apart from the immense socio-political changes that resulted from this reform, the opening of the legions to volunteer enlistment altered the way that the Roman soldier was recruited and laid the foundation for the standing armies of the Principate. Had Marius not altered the military into a service of long-term professionals, the Roman Empire would not have been able to expand into Western Europe or consolidate its holdings in the East during the last decades of the Republic. Without the formation of provincial colonies and frontier garrisons using retired and actively-serving soldiers, the Empire would not have been able to provide a high level of security to those citizens who lived within its borders. Through the immediate and later impacts of this reform, Marius guaranteed his place as a figure who has left a lasting legacy on the political and military history of Rome.

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<sup>70</sup> Caes. *B Civ* 1.14; Plut. *Pomp.* 6; App. *B Civ* 1.80-82, 2.2-3, 4.137, 5.17

<sup>71</sup> Augustus *Res Gestae* 3, 16, 28; Cass. Dio 51.3; see also Williams (n 45) 1-5

<sup>72</sup> Augustus *Res Gestae* 13, 26-33; see also Smith (n 10) 70-71; Williams (n 45) 1-12

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