

On the Wings of Eagles

On the Wings of Eagles:
The Reforms of Gaius Marius and the Creation
of Rome's First Professional Soldiers

By

Christopher Anthony Matthew

**CAMBRIDGE
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P U B L I S H I N G

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PREFACE

Gaius Marius (157-86BC) was one of the most innovative commanders of the Roman military. Between 107BC and 101BC Marius initiated five major reforms to the recruitment, equipment, deployment and training of the Roman legions. The effects of Marius' reforms are as varied as the reforms themselves. The available evidence indicates that those reforms which brought beneficial change to the army were subsequently retained by later commanders as a standard characteristic of Rome's legions. However, the evidence relating to Marius' reform to legionary weaponry suggests it created a distinct improvement to the Roman offensive capability but was not implemented as an aspect of the Roman art of war due to the nature of the reform itself and the events which followed its implementation.

Despite the dramatic effect of these reforms on the intertwined Roman political, military and social landscapes, the political effects of only one of these reforms (the opening of the legions to volunteers from the "head count") have been a predominant focus of later historians and commentators. Consequently, the practical military implications of Marius' reforms are often neglected, ignored or not examined appropriately. By examining evidence from a variety of sources it appears that many of the currently accepted interpretations of Marius' military reforms are either incomplete, speculatively inconclusive or simply incorrect.

This study will re-examine the available evidence to determine the effect that the Marian reforms had on the Roman military system and will evaluate many current academic conventions regarding these reforms to assess their validity. By analysing the nature of these reforms, Marius' motives for their implementation, their immediate effects, and the results of these reforms on the structure of the Roman army, a more comprehensive appraisal of the military impacts of Marius' reforms can be made.

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C.M.
Oct 2009

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Reference
<i>B.G.U.</i>	<i>Berliner Griechische Urkunden (Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Staatlichen Museen Berlin)</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (1863-) Vol. 7 – <i>Inscriptiones Britanniae Latinae</i> , R. Wunsch (ed.) (Berlin 1873)
<i>Crawford</i>	M.H. Crawford, <i>Roman Republican Coinage</i> (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1974)
<i>EE</i>	<i>Ephemeris Epigraphica I-IX</i> , (1872-1913)
<i>FIRA</i>	<i>Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani</i> , (2 nd Ed., Florence, 1940-1943)
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>P.Mich</i>	<i>Papyri in the University of Michigan Collection</i>
<i>P.Oxy</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
<i>RIC</i>	H. Mattingly and E.A. Sydenham, <i>Roman Imperial Coinage Vol.I: Augustus to Vitellius</i> (London, Spink and Sons, 1968)

SOURCES: USES AND METHODOLOGY

The military left a lasting impression on every aspect of Roman life and very few sources fail to reflect the involvement of the military in their point of interest. The impact that Marius' reforms had is evident from the array of evidence that can be utilised to reconstruct, analyse and understand many aspects of post-Marian Roman military history. However, the sources available for an analysis of Marius' reforms vary greatly in their nature, use and reliability. This has resulted in a number of contradictory, inconclusive, and in some cases incorrect, hypotheses about the reforms.

Many secondary sources covering Roman military history inadequately cover the Marian reforms. Broad works on the Roman military usually contain a generalised review of Marius' reforms with little or no analysis of the motivations behind them or detail of their impacts.¹ Discourses on particular aspects of the Roman military, such as Bishop and Coulston's work on Roman infantry equipment, explore possible/probable uses of equipment, formations and procedures and can aid research into the effects of Marius' reforms.² Illustrations in these works, often based on primary descriptions or archaeological finds, provide visual representations of many aspects of the Roman military. However, the accuracy of such illustrations is dependent upon artistic ability, and are open to errors, misinterpretation and/or artistic licence. Texts solely devoted to Marius are few in number, with even fewer in English, and predominantly concentrate on Marius' political career rather than his military one.³ There also appears

¹ See: P. Connolly, *Greece and Rome at War*, (London, Greenhill Books, 1998) pp.210-239; J. Warry, *Warfare in the Classical World*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1980) pp.133-137; Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army*, (London, BT Batsford Ltd, 1984) pp.57-79

² See: Bishop, M.C. & Coulston, J.C.N., *Roman Military Equipment from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome*, (London, BT Batsford, 1993)

³ In English: T. Carney, *A Biography of Gaius Marius*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1974); R.J. Evans, *Gaius Marius: A Political Biography*, (Pretoria, University of South Africa, 1994); in French: J.V. Ooteghen, *Caius Marius*, (Paris,

to be a tendency amongst some scholars to ascribe to Marius any military reform that occurred between 110BC and 30BC, which has little evidence for the exact date or method of implementation.⁴ Many of these attributions are unreferenced and appear to have little or no confirmatory evidence to substantiate them. Therefore, further research must obtain comparative or confirmative evidence from other sources in order to appraise their effect.

Any attempt at a reconstruction of the Marian reforms must begin with the ancient written sources. Sallust's *Jugurthine War* and Plutarch's *Life of Marius* are the two main texts which cover Marius' career and many of his reforms. Less detailed aspects are contained in the works of authors such as Appian, Florus, Pliny, Orosius and Frontinus writing in the first to fifth centuries AD. Comparative aspects of the operational, organisational and functional practices of the pre and post Marian Roman military can be obtained from the works of Polybius, Livy, Caesar, Josephus and Vegetius. Historians and biographers such as Tacitus and Suetonius also provide details of the military operations and political background of the late republic and early principate. The works of grammarians, such as Festus, provide details of much of the terminology which is relevant to any analysis of the Marian reforms.

However, a number of issues can bring the validity of an ancient source into question. The political or ethnic bias of the author and their technical knowledge (or lack thereof) can be major indicators of a text's unreliability. Sallust, for example, was an associate of Caesar and commanded some of Caesar's troops during the civil war.⁵ Consequently, Sallust's works are very "pro-Marius" and "anti-senate" in their approach. This is clearly reflected in the speech that Sallust attributes to Marius prior to his election in 107BC.⁶ Temporal distance from the subject can also cause inconsistencies. Plutarch, writing in the second century AD, is three hundred years removed from his subject and is himself dependent upon sources, such as Sulla's memoirs, which are unlikely to have been totally impartial or objective. Other documents are incomplete. The best example of this is the fragmentary nature of books XXXIV/XXXV of the *Histories*

Secretariat Des Publications, 1964); in German: F.W. Robinson, *Marius, Saturninus und Glaucia*, (Druck von Anton Kampfe in Jena, 1912); in Italian: A. Passerini, *Studi su Caio Mario*, (Milano, Celuc, 1971)

⁴ See pages 111-114.

⁵ J. Warren, *The Past and its Presenters*, (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1998), pp.61-63

⁶ Sall. *Iug.* 84.1-2

by Diodorus which, unfortunately, are missing large sections covering the period of Marius' career.⁷

Other sources provide additional information useful in the reappraisal of the Marian reforms. Documentary evidence in the form of lists, letters and military diplomas from the time of the principate provide first-hand depictions of life in the post-Marian Roman military. Epigraphic evidence and reliefs, such as tombstones, Trajan's Column and the Altar of Ahenobarbus, provide visual representations of the pre- and post-Marian army and provide a strong comparative source for certain aspects of Marius' reforms. Archaeological evidence in the form of encampments, coins and weapons allow the researcher to examine sites and artefacts directly related to the formation and equipment of the Roman military and are some of the best available evidence for analysing the extent of the Marian reforms. The basis of this work is to analyse these sources of evidence and to expand on the hitherto inadequate coverage of the military effects of the Marian reforms.

⁷ Diod. Sic. Books 34-35

CHAPTER ONE

THE PRE-MARIAN ROMAN ARMY

To fully understand the impact of Marius' reforms, the structure of the pre-Marian army must be considered. Book six of Polybius' *Histories* is the most comprehensive ancient source available for details of the Roman military in the late third century and early second century BC. The pre-Marian army was enrolled by a process known as 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.¹ 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.² 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.³

At the time of the Second Punic War (c.218-202BC), only those members of the populace whose nett worth was above four thousand *asses* (an "*as*" was a small bronze coin) were liable to serve in the army.⁴ 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

¹ Polyb. 6.11, 6.19-21

² Polyb. 6.19; see also: Keppie (n.1) pp.33-34; P.A. Brunt, 'The Army and the Land in the Roman Revolution', *JRS* 52, (1962) p.74

³ J.W. Rich, 'The Supposed Roman Manpower Shortage in the Second Century BC', *Historia* 32, (1983) pp.289-290

⁴ Polyb. 6.11, 6.19. See also: E. Gabba, *Republican Rome, the Army and the Allies*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1976) pp.5-6

perform more efficiently as soldiers.⁵ 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 a section of heavy infantry known as the *principes*; while those who were older were assigned to the *triarii*, who were also heavy infantry.⁶

The *velites* were armed with a small shield (*parma*) and several small javelins (*pila*).⁷ They appear to have worn no armour apart from a basic helmet occasionally covered with animal skin to aid identification. The *hastati*, were armed with a larger shield (*scutum*), the Spanish sword (*gladius*) and a light and heavy javelin. Their protective accoutrements consisted of greaves, a plumed helmet and body armour. Those with a property value above one hundred thousand *asses* wore coats of chain-mail (*loricae*) while those of lesser net worth wore a square bronze breast-plate called a *pectorale*. The *principes* and the *triarii* were armed in a similar fashion to the *hastati* except that the *triarii* were armed with a thrusting spear (*hasta*) instead of javelins.⁸

Contrary to current convention, two passages from Polybius' *Histories* suggest that the pre-Marian army was initially 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.⁹ Polybius also states that the cost of additional arms and equipment was deducted from the soldier's pay.¹⁰ 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

⁵ Plut. *Mar.* 9; Julius Exuperantius, *History*, 12-13

⁶ Polyb. 6.22-23

⁷ Polyb. 6.22-23.; Livy, 26.4.4; see also: N.V. Sekunda, S. Northwood & M. Simkins, *Caesar's Legions: The Roman Soldier 753BC to 117AD*, (Oxford, Osprey, 2003) p.72

⁸ Polyb. 6.22-23

⁹ Polyb. 6.21

¹⁰ Polyb. 6.39

date. The issue of equipment is paralleled by Plutarch who also states that the pre-Marian soldier was “given arms”.¹¹ 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 clearly illustrate.¹²

Each legion contained six hundred *triarii* and twelve hundred of each of the *velites*, *hastati*, and *principes*, giving a base strength of four thousand two hundred men.¹³ These numbers could vary if more men were enrolled during the *dilectus* or if the military requirement of the state necessitated a stronger force.¹⁴ During a *tumultus*, or state of emergency, those below the minimum property requirement, volunteers and even slaves were been enrolled by various commanders to serve in Rome’s legions, with some serving for considerable lengths of time.¹⁵

Each class (*ordine*) of soldier within a legion was sub-divided into ten maniples (*manipuli*). The *triarii* were organised into ten maniples of sixty men. Each of the ten maniples of *hastati*, *principes* and *velites* contained 120 men.¹⁶ These larger maniples were further divided into “centuries” of approximately sixty men, the smallest administrative unit of a legion.¹⁷ Polybius and Livy state that when the Roman army formed for battle, they deployed with each maniple behind the maniple in the *ordine* to its front.¹⁸ Modern scholars have apparently ignored these statements and revised this deployment to the *quincunx*, or “checkerboard”; a pattern used in the arrangement of trees and vines, and the positioning of defensive entrenchments, but never associated with the deployment of the legions (Fig. 1.1).¹⁹

¹¹ Plut. *Mar.* 9

¹² Tac. *Ann.* 1.17

¹³ Polyb. 6.21

¹⁴ Polyb. 6.21; see also: J.P. Roth, *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War 264BC-AD235*, (Leiden, Brill, 1990) p.20

¹⁵ Slaves: Livy, 22.57; those eager to serve: Plut. *Fab.* 26; volunteers: Livy, 42.34; head count: Polyb. 6.19; length of service: Polyb. 6.19

¹⁶ Polyb. 6.24

¹⁷ Polyb. 6.21-24

¹⁸ Polyb. 6.40, 14.8; Livy, 8.8

¹⁹ Sekunda *et al.* (n.14) pp.68-69; Connolly (n.1) pp.127-128, 140-141; Keppie (n.1) p.34; for uses of the *quincunx* formation in agriculture see: Columella *Rust.* 3.13.4, 3.15.1; Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.9; for entrenchments see: Caes. *B Gall.* 7.73

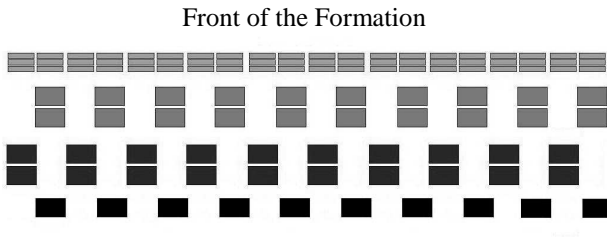


Fig. 1.1: the deployment of a manipular Roman army (c.190BC) in the *quincunx* formation of current convention.

Fighting would commence with the *velites* showering an approaching enemy with javelins. They would then retire through the gaps in the ranks when hard pressed and reform behind the *triarii*, allowing the *hastati* to engage (first with their javelins and then with drawn swords if the engagement developed into a hand-to-hand struggle). The *hastati* could withdraw through the spaces in the ranks if also hard pressed to allow the fresh contingents of *principes* to engage a fatiguing enemy. Likewise, the *principes* could withdraw behind the *triarii* if routed.²⁰ This deployment allowed the legion to effectively engage any enemy who fought in a dense, phalanx-style, formation (such as the Greeks or Macedonians) as the rigidity of the phalanx would not allow an opponent to exploit the gaps between the maniples. However, the spacing in between the maniples opened the legion to penetration by any enemy who fought in a more open manner.

It was in an army such as this, and using these tactics, that Marius served during his early career. Through Marius' reforms the recruitment, organisation, deployment and tactics of the manipular army would be significantly altered.

²⁰ Veg. *Mil.* 1.20, 2.15

CHAPTER TWO

A SUMMARY OF MARIUS' MILITARY CAREER

A review of Marius' military career is essential to appraise his reforms in their correct historical context. Marius was born near Arpinum in northern Italy to relatively obscure parents who lived from their own labours.¹ As such, Marius was not part of the Roman aristocracy and seems to have used a career in the military as a means of advancement within the institutions of the Roman state. Marius' military career began in 134BC as a cavalry trooper in Spain under Scipio Aemilianus.² He next held a tribunate in the 120s BC and saw service in Asia Minor.³ In 115BC Marius was elected *praetor*, and was afterwards given a *propraetorian* governorship of Spain in 114BC.⁴

In 111BC, Rome commenced hostilities against Jugurtha, King of Numidia (a region covering parts of modern day Algeria and Tunisia). Over the next two years broken treaties, revolts and the capture and humiliation of a Roman army, failed to bring an end to the conflict.⁵ Quintus Caecilius Metellus was placed in command for 109BC with Marius assigned to him as a cavalry commander.⁶ Metellus was extended in his command for 108BC but battles at Muthul, Zama and Vaga failed to capture Jugurtha or end the conflict. After much petitioning to Metellus, the fifty-year-old Marius was able to stand in the elections for 107BC and was elected to the consulship. With the popular support of the *comitia* Marius replaced Metellus, whose command the senate had wished to extend again, in control of the Numidian campaign.⁷

¹ Plut. *Mar.* 3

² Plut. *Mar.* 3

³ Sall. *Iug.* 63.4-5; See also: Evans (n.3) p.29

⁴ Praetorship: Plut. *Mar.* 5; see also: Evans (n.3) pp.44-48; governorship: Plut. *Mar.* 6

⁵ Sall. *Iug.* 27.1-39.5

⁶ Sall. *Iug.* 43.1-46.7

⁷ Sall. *Iug.* 73.4-7

Marius recruited heavily and instigated the first of his reforms to the Roman military: the disregard of the property requirements for enlistment.⁸ After several small, and somewhat successful, engagements, Marius had his command extended for 106BC, captured several cities, (including Jugurtha's treasury) and was reinforced by a contingent of cavalry under the command of Lucius Cornelius Sulla.⁹ The War concluded in 105BC when Bocchus, a Numidian ally who had negotiated a separate treaty with Sulla, gave Jugurtha over to him.¹⁰ With the conflict concluded, Marius was immediately elected to his second consulship in 104BC to command the legions against an impending invasion by three hundred thousand migrating Germans who had defeated two consular armies at Arausio the previous year.¹¹ New troops were enlisted and it is at this stage that Marius instituted three more interdependent military reforms: the alteration to the baggage train and to the amount each legionary carried; the use of the cohort as the basic unit of the army; and the adoption of the eagle as the legionary standard.

The Germans headed for Spain, and Marius was elected to his third and fourth consulships (103BC and 102BC) while he trained his troops and awaited the approach of the Germans. In 102BC the German tribes launched a two-pronged advance on the Italian peninsula.¹² Splitting his forces, Marius advanced to the mouth of the Rhône to engage one group consisting of the tribes of the Teutones and the Ambrones, while his consular colleague, Catulus, was sent to hold the alpine passes against the Cimbri and the Tigurini. After digging a canal (the *Fossa Mariana*), near the modern French city of Arles to expedite supplies, Marius defeated the Teutones/Ambrones at Aquae Sextiae in late 102BC before moving to reinforce Catulus who had been forced from the Alps.¹³ After being elected to his fifth consulship, Marius made his final reform, an alteration to the legionary javelin, at some time prior to the battle of Vercellae in 101BC where the combined armies of Marius and Catulus defeated the Cimbri and halted the German threat to Rome.¹⁴

⁸ Sall. *Iug.* 86.2

⁹ Sall. *Iug.* 11.94-95

¹⁰ Sall. *Iug.* 12.102-113

¹¹ Sall. *Iug.* 11.114; Plut. *Mar.* 11; Eutr. 5.2.1

¹² Plut. *Mar.* 14-15

¹³ Plut. *Mar.* 19-24

¹⁴ Plut. *Mar.* 25

The remainder of Marius' career was a turbulent amalgam of little political success, including his sixth consulship, failing health, conflict with the senate over land grants for veterans and with Sulla over the command of a new campaign in the East. Militarily, Marius held an active command during the Social War of 90BC-89BC and the discord with Sulla resulted in civil war, mass executions, proscriptions and exile.¹⁵ Marius was elected to his seventh consulship in 86BC but died seventeen days later at the age of seventy-one, having made no further reforms to the structure of the Roman military system.¹⁶

¹⁵ Plut. *Mar.* 28-44

¹⁶ Plut. *Mar.* 45

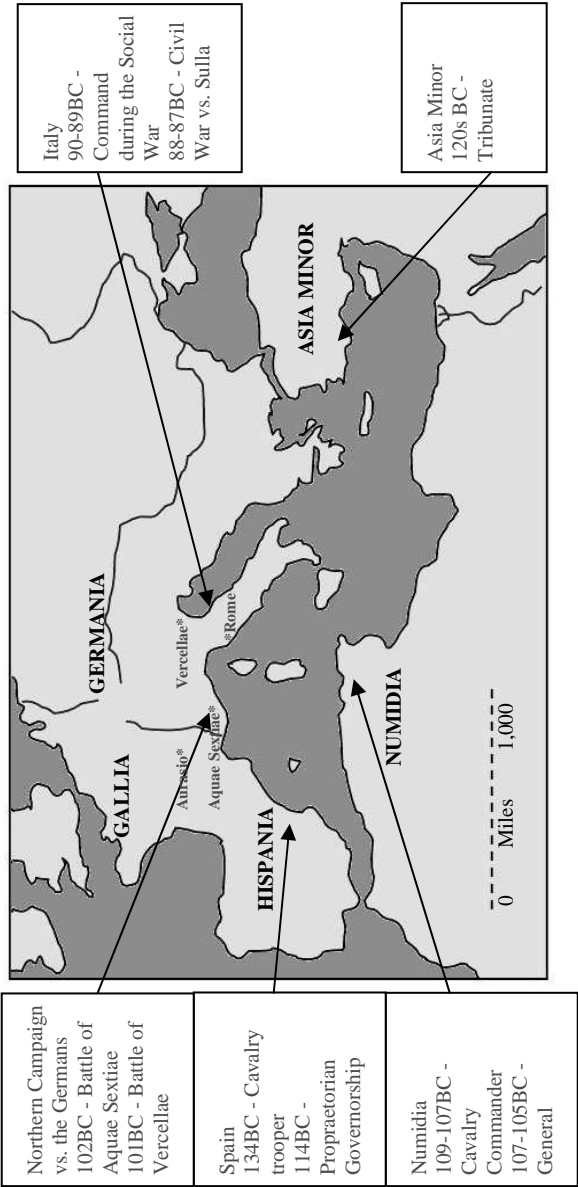


Fig. 2.1: The location of events during Marius' military career.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HEAD COUNT (*CAPITE CENSI*)¹

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 107BC 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 Numidian command in 107BC, he immediately raised a *supplementum*, a recruitment of additional troops and replacements to supplement the legions already campaigning in North Africa.² As part of this recruitment Marius recalled many veterans back into service, and called for volunteers from the *capite censi* (the head-count).³ 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.⁴ The opening of the legions to volunteers was a departure from the standard practice of only enlisting the propertied classes via the *dilectus*.

¹ Parts of this chapter formed the basis of an article titled 'The Enrolment of the *Capite Censi* by Gaius Marius: A Reappraisal' which appeared in the journal *Ancient History: Resources for Teachers* 36:1 (2006), pp.1-17. I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of the journal for allowing me to reproduce some of the information contained in that article here.

² Sall. *Iug.* 86.4

³ Sall. *Iug.* 86.4; Plut. *Mar.* 9

⁴ Polyb. 6.19; Sall. *Iug.* 86.1-3; Plut. *Mar.* 9; Julius Exuperantius, *History*, 12-13; Some scholars take the speech of Tiberius Gracchus (Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 9) as evidence for the 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 are somewhat suspect.

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 captives were employed as labour 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.⁵ Several years of constant (or even intermittent) service in the legions would have been enough to ruin a small farmer and they would have little hope of obtaining continuous, remunerative, employment elsewhere once they were discharged from their military service.⁶ Both Appian and Plutarch imply that those who lost their lands were still eligible for enlistment.⁷ 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.⁸ In either 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*. The following reappraisal of these theories indicates that the motivation behind Marius' reform was vastly different than 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. These theories suggest that the minimum property requirement for military service had been gradually reduced from eleven thousand *asses* in the sixth century BC to one

⁵ App. *B Civ.* 1.7; see also: A. Santosuosso, *Storming the Heavens*, (London, Pimlico, 2004) p.1; R.E. Smith, *Service in the Post Marian Army*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1958) pp.7-8; P.A. Brunt, 'The Army and the Land in the Roman Revolution', *JRS* 52, (1962) p.75; M. Grant, *The World of Rome*, (London, Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 1960) p.109; K.D. White, 'Latifundia' in *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, No.14 (1967) pp.62-79; H.H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, (London, Methuen & Co., 1976) pp.19-22; P. Garnsey & R. Saller, *The Roman Empire – Economy, Society and Culture*, (London, Duckworth, 1987) pp.66-71; A.J. Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy – The Hannibalic War's Effect on Roman Life Vol.II*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1965) pp.298-312

⁶ Brunt (n.4) p.75; Santosuosso (n.4) p.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), pp.668-731

⁷ App. *B Civ.* 1.7; Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 9

⁸ J.W. Rich, 'The Supposed Roman Manpower Shortage in the Second Century BC', *Historia* 32, (1983) pp.298-299

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.⁹ 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; which seems to have only been under the direst of circumstances.¹⁰ This is clearly illustrated in the enrolment of six thousand slaves to form a supplementary legion after the Roman defeat at Cannae in 216BC.¹¹ The acceptance of volunteers into the army, and the disregard of the property requirements by Marius, is seen by many as the next evolutionary step in this process rather than a reshaping of it.¹²

Conversely Rich, 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

⁹ L. Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army*, (London, BT Batsford Ltd, 1984) p.61; Santosuosso (n.4) p.10-11; Smith (n.4) pp.4-10; S. Yalichev, *Mercenaries of the Ancient World*, (London, Constable, 1997) p.238; J. Warry, *Warfare in the Classical World*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1980) p.133; A. Goldsworthy, *In the Name of Rome*, (London, Phoenix, 2004) p.137; E. Gabba, *Republican Rome, the Army and the Allies*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1976) pp.1-19. See also: M.H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, Vol.II, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1974) p.625

¹⁰ Livy, 22.11, 42.34; Plut. *Fab.* 26; App. *Hisp.* 84. See also Rich (n.7) p.290 on the possibility that the proletariat was enlisted during the Pyrrhic War.

¹¹ Livy, 22.57; this defeat, in which the Romans lost around 80,000 men, left Rome in a state of panic as they thought that the invading army of Hannibal was about to march directly on the city itself. This partially account for the 'emergency measures' taken to bolster the numbers in the legions quickly.

¹² Keppie (n.8) p.61; M. Grant, *The Army of the Caesars*, (New York, M. Evans & Co. 1974) p.4; Smith (n.4) pp.8-10; N. Rosenstein, 'Republican Rome' in K. Raafaub & N. Rosenstein (eds.) *War and Society in Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999) pp.208-209; Yalichev (n.8) p.238; G. Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries AD*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1998) p.19; J.F.C. Fuller, *Julius Caesar: Man, Soldier and Tyrant*, (Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Publishing, 1998) p.26; L. Adkins & R.A. Adkins, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998) pp.52,82; H. Last, 'Marius the General' in D. Kagan, *Problems in Ancient History Vol. II - The Roman World*, (New York, Macmillan, 1975) p.228; Warry (n.8) p.133; Santosuosso (n.4) p.10; P. Connolly, *Greece and Rome at War*, (London, Greenhill Books, 1998) p.214; A. Goldsworthy, *The Complete Roman Army*, (London, Thames & Hudson, 2003) p.47

possess satisfactory evidence for an actual reduction in the property qualifications for enlistment. Rich concludes that while retariffing and inflationary forces will have played a role in the development of financial classifications, the discrepancies in the ancient sources cannot be satisfactorily resolved.¹³ A re-examination of the same data suggests an alternative hypothesis to that of a trend where the overall property class levels for enlistment are reduced. Of particular interest is the fact that the first to fourth class qualification levels appear to have remained relatively unaltered from the sixth century BC to the first century AD. It is only the fifth class qualification level which is altered (Table 1). If, as some argue, the reducing levels for the fifth class indicate a corresponding reduction in available Roman manpower, then it can only be a reduction of those of the lowest class who were eligible to serve as *velites* (a point which most scholars seem to have missed). There must have still been sufficient numbers to fill any levy of the first to fourth classes to warrant the retention of the same property qualifications for these classes down the centuries. 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.

¹³ Rich (n.7) pp.305-316. Rich suspects that errors on the part or 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.8) pp.614-615, 621-625. See also Gabba (n.8) pp.2-12