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Edward Anson ✦ Michael Fronda ✦ David Hollander
Timothy Howe ✦ Joseph Roisman ✦ John Vanderspoel
Pat Wheatley ✦ Sabine Müller



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The Changing Composition of the Roman Army in the Late Republic and the So-Called “Marian-Reforms”

François Gauthier

Modern historians have often assumed that Gaius Marius introduced wide ranging and long-lasting reforms that greatly transformed the Roman army and had a profound impact on Roman politics as well.¹ The so-called Marian reforms supposedly involved both tactical innovations and significant reorganization of military recruitment and financing. These included: the elimination of the Roman cavalry (to be replaced entirely by foreign auxiliary cavalry), the disbandment of light-armed troops and the standardization of the weapons and kit of heavy infantry, the reorganization of legions into cohorts (replacing the earlier, manipular structure), and perhaps most significantly, the recruitment of landless soldiers who previously would not have met minimum property qualifications. These new recruits would be mostly volunteers and receive grants of land upon release. Lastly, it is often assumed that these reforms were permanent. Thus, according to the *communis opinio*, Marius permanently transformed the Roman military into a professional army that was mostly composed of landless citizens equipped uniformly. Yet, despite the widespread acceptance of this view, there is actually very little evidence for the “Marian Reforms.”

This paper will examine the Marian Reforms, with particular focus on the alleged transformation of recruiting, equipment, and training. It will argue that the Marian Reforms are a myth created by modern historiography. What Marius did was neither new nor permanent. Thus, speaking of a “post-Marian army” is misleading as this entails that the Roman military was quickly and profoundly transformed by a single individual.

Evidence for the Marian Reforms

Most famously, the first steps of the Marian reforms are thought to be attested in the context of the War against Jurgurtha. In 107 BCE, Gaius Marius, one of the newly elected consuls, was given the command to continue the war against the Numidian king. According to two well-known passages from Sallust and Plutarch, Marius recruited many men who were poor and of low status:

¹ For instance, Christ 2002, 61: “Das neue Berufsheer verlor somit die timokratischen - auf Vermögensklassen beruhenden - Grundlagen der alten republikanischen Armeen. Es ging von der Freiwilligkeit des Dienstes, insbesondere von der Anwerbung der ärmeren Landbevölkerung aus, weniger von jener des hauptstädtischen Proletariats, das für den harten, disziplinierten militärischen Dienst weithin ungeeignet war.” Also: Serrati 2013, 155-168; Matthew 2010; 2006, 1-17; Marino 1980, 354-364; Gabba 1976, 1-23; Sordi 1972, 379-385; Harmand 1969, 61-74; Carney 1961, 31-33, esp. 29: “[...] employing a citizen militia conscripted from the middle-class, Metellus could not afford either a long-drawn-out campaign or serious casualties. Marius’ reform provided the abundant expendable, man-power (sic), available of Rome’s military effort. Marius contributed no new ideas to the strategical formula evolved, merely executing it on a larger scale, with greater human resources and more verve and elasticity of movement, for the volunteers could be treated as professionals.”

He himself in the meantime enrolled soldiers, not according to the classes in the manner of our forefathers, but allowing anyone to volunteer, for the most part the proletariat. 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.²

Plutarch offers a very similar account to that of Sallust:

He was triumphantly elected and at once began to levy troops. Contrary to law and custom he enlisted many a poor and insignificant man, although former commanders had not accepted such persons, but bestowed arms, just as they would any honour, only on those whose property assessment made them worthy to receive these, each soldier being supposed to put his substance in pledge to the state.³

These two excerpts are the most often quoted pieces of evidence concerning the alleged change in recruitment practice by Marius. Based on them, scholars often argue that Marius abolished all property qualifications despite the fact that this is not exactly what these passages say.

From a technical point of view there is evidence that Marius introduced a different kind of shield as well as modifications to the *pilum*.⁴ Moreover, some sources credit Marius for having his men carry their own kit and equipment, hence the creation of the so-called “Marian mules.”⁵ It is also relevant to list here some evidence not mentioning Marius at all but nonetheless having been frequently linked to him by modern historians. First of all, there is a passage in Frontinus and Valerius Maximus saying that P. Rutilius Rufus (cos. 105) used gladiatorial instructors to train his troops.⁶ Perhaps curiously, some scholars have seen this as being part of the Marian reforms. Furthermore, the creation of the cohort is also frequently attributed to Marius by modern historians, although no source makes him responsible for it. Moreover, as will be discussed, there are many instances where the cohort makes an appearance in the sources before the time of Marius. Finally, scholars most often think that the alleged abolition of all property qualifications by Marius caused the disbandment of the citizen cavalry and light infantry since all citizens were from now on equipped as heavy infantry. These types of troops were entirely replaced by foreign auxiliaries. Not only is there no evidence to support this, but there are also clear indications that it did not happen.

Most of all, it is this supposed abolition of property qualifications by Marius that has been seen as having a sort of domino effect on the entire Roman military. Because of it, historians have thought that the Roman army became a professional force no longer recruited according

² Sall., *Iug.* 86.2-4: (*ipse interea milites scribere, non more maiorum neque ex classibus, sed uti quousque lubido erat, capite censos plerosque. id factum alii inopia bonorum, alii per ambitionem consulis memorabant, quod ab eo genere celebratus auctusque erat et homini potentiam quaerenti egentissimus quisque opportunissimus, quod neque sua cara, quippe quae nulla sunt, et omnia cum pretio honesta videntur*).

³ Plu. *Mar.* 9.1: (ἀναγορευθεὶς δὲ λαμπρῶς εὐθὺς ἐστρατολόγει, παρὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τὴν συνήθειαν πολὺν τὸν ἄπορον καὶ φαῦλον καταγράφων, τῶν πρόσθεν ἡγεμόνων οὐ προσδεχομένων τοὺς τοιοῦτους, ἀλλ', ὥσπερ ἄλλο τι τῶν καλῶν, τὰ ὅπλα μετὰ τιμῆς τοῖς ἀξίοις νεμόντων, ἐνέχυρον τὴν οὐσίαν ἐκάστου τιθέναι δοκοῦντος).

⁴ Fest. 274 L; Plu. *Mar.* 25. See quotes and discussion below.

⁵ Plu. *Mar.* 13; Frontin. *Str.* 4.1.7; Fest. 135 L. See quotes and discussion below.

⁶ Frontin. *Str.* 4.2.2; Val. Max. 2.3.2.

to the logic of the timocratic system clearly attested by Polybius.⁷ Building on this assumption, scholars have linked Marius with the innovations highlighted above.

Recruitment of the Landless by Marius

Marius is thus credited with permanently abolishing property qualifications and thus officially opening the Roman army to citizens not meeting them. We have seen that after he had been appointed consul in 107, Marius proceeded to enrol such people. However, there was already an army stationed in Africa comprising several legions.⁸ Of course, fighting had somewhat depleted its strength but not to the point that a relief army was needed.⁹ Indeed, Marius merely asked for reinforcements (*postulare legionibus supplementum*) and thus enrolled a limited body of soldiers to bolster the legions engaged in Africa.¹⁰ The size of this levy perhaps numbered a few thousand men.¹¹ According to Sallust the senate thought that conscription would be unpopular for this campaign and gladly voted a *supplementum* so that Marius would either lose the means to reinforce the army in Africa or the sympathy of the people. However the senate's assumption proved to be wrong as volunteers enthusiastically assembled.¹² The senate may also initially have tried to limit Marius' ability to recruit for more than personal reasons. To be sure, news from the defeats of Noreia in 112 and of the consul Silanus in Transalpine Gaul in 109 against the Cimbri and Teutons had reached Rome.¹³ It is reasonable to think that the senate was disinclined to divert too much manpower to Marius because of the dangerous situation in the north. This would soon become disastrous with the defeat at Arausio in 105.¹⁴

The enrollment of *proletarii* by Marius was not unprecedented. These were sometimes pressed into service, along with slaves and freedmen, especially in case of emergency. *Proletarii* were first enrolled in 280 BCE by Q. Marcius Philippus for the war against Pyrrhus and Tarentum.¹⁵ Now, were Marius' volunteers mostly *proletarii*? The sources do not say that all of

⁷ Pol. 6.19-23.

⁸ Sall. *Iug.* 27.5: "An army was then enrolled to be transported to Africa; the soldiers' pay and other provisions for war were voted." (*deinde exercitus qui in Africam portaretur scribitur, stipendium aliaque quae bello usui forent decernuntur*).

⁹ Sall. *Iug.* 54.10.

¹⁰ Sall. *Iug.* 84.2: "he demanded reinforcements for the legions" (*postulare legionibus supplementum*).

¹¹ Pace Matthew 2010, 6: "Marius recruited heavily" *contra* Brunt 1971, 430; Rich 1983, 287-331; Evans 1994, 75.

¹² Sall. *Iug.* 84.3-4.

¹³ Roman defeats: Liv. *Epit.* 63; 65; Plu. *Mar.* 16; App. *Gall.* 1.13; Vell. 2.12; Tac. *Germ.* 37; Strab. 5.214.

¹⁴ Van Ooteghem 1964, 147: "En effet la situation était devenue alarmante aux frontières du Nord, où les Romains essuyaient défaite sur défaite. Il est donc vraisemblable qu'une des raisons qui poussèrent le Sénat à laisser carte blanche à Marius pour son *dilectus* était le désir d'en finir au plus tôt avec Jugurtha afin de pouvoir parer à toute éventualité du côté du Nord."

¹⁵ Cassius Hemina *FGrH* 6. F. 24: "Cassius in the *Annals*, book 2: then Marcius the praetor armed the proletarians for the first time." (*Cassius Hemina annali libro II: Tunc Marcius praeco primum proletarios armauit*); Orosius 4.1.3; Enn. *Ann.* 170-172; Rankov 2007, 32; van Ooteghem 1964, 149. After the disasters of Lake Trasimene

these men were *proletarii*, as Marius called upon veterans, some of whom he knew personally while others had heard of his reputation before.¹⁶ Sallust mentions that there was a lack of “better men” (*inopia bonorum*) and Marius’ ambition since he owed his fame to members from the lower classes of society.¹⁷ For a long time, modern scholarship has argued that the evidence from Sallust meant that Marius’ volunteers must have been *proletarii* because of a dearth of citizens meeting the minimum property qualification for military service.¹⁸ However, subsequent research on Roman demography has showed that it was not a matter of demographic decline in the second century BCE. On the contrary, the population of Italy seemed to have increased, at least in certain regions.¹⁹

This brings us to the thorny issue of the property qualification of the fifth class. Whereas the sources provide relatively constant figures for the first class (with some slight differences from one source to another), those for the fifth class present much greater variations (see Table 1 below, for figures and sources). A popular solution has been to propose that a gradual reduction in the minimum property qualifications for military service took place.²⁰ According to this reconstruction, the census rating of the fifth class would have been lowered from the Livian/Dionysian figure (11,000 – 12,500 asses) to the Polybian one (4,000 asses), and eventually

and Cannae, Rome had to recruit slaves and freedmen to make up for the terrible losses suffered in those two battles: Liv. 22.57.11; 23.14.2-4; 23.35.5; 24.10.3; 24.14.3; 25.6; 26.35.5; 31.1; 35.5-9; 37.1-11; App. *Han.* 27; Florus, 1.22.23; Frontin. *Strat.* 4.7.24; Eutropius 3.10.

¹⁶ Sall. *Iug.* 84.2: “All the while he gave his first attention to preparation for the war. He asked that the legions should be reinforced, summoned auxiliaries from foreign nations and kings, besides calling out the bravest men from Latium and from our allies, the greater number of whom he knew from actual service but a few only by reputation. By special inducements, too, he persuaded veterans who had served their time to join his expedition.” (*Interim quae bello opus erant prima habere, postulare legionibus supplementum, auxilia a populis et regibus sociisque arcessere, praeterea ex Latio fortissimum quemque, plerosque militiae, paucos fama cognitos accire, et ambiundo cogere homines emeritis stipendiis secum proficisci*). Keppie 1984, 42, estimates the strength of the *supplementum* at 3,000 men. See also Pelling 2002, 221; Cadiou 2009, 26: “On pense parfois qu’en levant le *supplementum* dont il avait besoin sans tenir compte de la limite censitaire, Marius contournait habilement le piège que lui tendait un sénat parfaitement au fait de l’impopularité de la conscription à cette époque. Mais Salluste n’écrit pas exactement cela: il affirme que le sénat « croyait » que la levée était impopulaire, ce que démentit du reste l’enthousiasme des très nombreux volontaires qui étaient désireux de partir avec le nouveau consul. Pour ma part, j’interprète cette présentation des faits par Salluste comme une péjoration délibérée de l’état d’esprit de la nobilitas dont le sénat était le bastion. L’historien popularis veut dire que cette élite était si dévoyée qu’elle était même incapable de comprendre que le reste du *populus* n’avait pas, comme elle, perdu jusqu’au goût des armes. Je me demande si ce n’est pas en ce sens qu’il faut alors comprendre l’expression *inopia bonorum* employée plus loin par Salluste. Il ne s’agirait pas d’une référence à une insuffisance numérique des *adsidui*, comme on l’affirme généralement, mais plutôt à un déclin moral des bons citoyens (les *boni*), un thème constant dans l’œuvre de Salluste.”

¹⁷ Sall. *Iug.* 86.

¹⁸ Brunt 1971, 75-7, 402-8; Gabba 1976, 1-19; Keaveney 2007, 19-23.

¹⁹ Hin 2013; De Ligt 2012; Launaro 2011; Rosenstein 2004, 17-20; Lo Cascio 1994, 23-40.

²⁰ De Ligt 2012, Erdkamp 2011, 67; Cadiou 2009, 157-171; Cagniard 2007, 81; Humm 2005, 284-331; Rosenstein 2002, 163-191; Shochat 1980; Brunt 1971, 402-405; Gabba 1976, 7-8; also Bloch and Carcopino 1936, 112, with much condescension: “Le recrutement ne cesse d’abaisser son niveau à tous les degrés, jusqu’au jour où Marius, tirant la conclusion des faits accomplis, décidera de remplir les légions de la République avec les déchets sociaux du peuple romain.(!)” On census classes and military organization, see also Cadiou 2002, 76-90; Miller 1992, 59-70; Nicolet 1978, 249-272; Gabba 1977, 13-33; Kienast 1975, 83-112.

to the figure of 1,500 asses found in Cicero, Nonius, and Gellius. Such a change would have most likely taken place after the great defeats inflicted on Rome in the early years of the Second Punic War. This measure would have allowed Rome to mobilize more men in order to make up for the huge casualties suffered, as well as to fill the ranks of the additional legions levied to fight a war of an unprecedented scale.²¹ However, such a reduction in property qualifications is nowhere explicitly attested in the sources and it is modern scholars who place the figures in decreasing order. In an important article John Rich observed that: “the only prudent course is to accept that speculation about the history of these census ratings is fruitless and to admit our ignorance.”²² Rich is perhaps too pessimistic on this matter. A detailed reconstruction of the census ratings necessarily involves conjecture. Ultimately, whether one wishes to argue in favour or against a decrease in property qualifications, it cannot be said that Marius permanently abrogated recruitment based on census classes. Indeed, Marius’ recruitment of a limited number of *proletarii* did not mean that property qualifications were to be disregarded for the enrollment of troops in the future.²³

Marius’ veterans from the African campaign received land after their service ended.²⁴ Several scholars stress that this was an important development related to the incorporation of landless recruits. However, this too was not unprecedented: soldiers had benefitted from land grants earlier in the second century and it is generally agreed that these men were property holders.²⁵ Furthermore, land grants did not become a standard feature on discharge in the late republic.²⁶

²¹ De Ligt, 2007, 125.

²² Rich 1983, 315-316; Rich 2007, 162. This has not prevented several historians from deploying much ingenuity to try to solve the problem: Lo Cascio 2016, 156-7; Rathbone 1993, 121-152; Gabba 1976, 1-19; Nicolet 1966, 18-63, esp. 58-9: “Nulle question n’est sans doute plus embrouillée, dans la science moderne, que celle des qualifications censitaires: c’est que les sources anciennes sont elles-mêmes contradictoires et peu sûres; en effet, tout dépend de l’idée qu’on se fait de l’histoire monétaire de Rome, et celle-ci était, jusqu’à ces derniers temps, remplie de mystères : dévaluations successives du bronze et de l’argent, permanence de la monnaie de compte, se conjuguent avec le fait que, dans des documents non pas économiques mais censitaires, les classifications ont peut-être gardé un caractère archaïque, pour faire de cette question un véritable traquenard.”

²³ Keaveney 2007, 28; Paddock 1985, 142-159; Keppie 1984, 61; Aigner 1974, 16: “Von einer Änderung der Heeresfassung durch ihn kann nämlich auch keineswegs gesprochen werden. Seine Anwerbung - nicht Aushebung - von zum Kriegsdienst nicht verpflichteten Leuten hat nämlich keinen Niederschlag in irgendeinem Statut - etwa in einer lex Maria - gefunden, ja man kann mit Sicherheit behaupten, daß die alte Zensus-Dienstpflcht nach wie vor bestehen blieb und auch zum Tragen kam [...]”; Schneider 1977, 100: “Freilich bestand weiterhin das alte *dilectus* - System fort, gerade im Verlaufe der Bürgerkriege wurde oft noch der Eintritt in die Armee erzwungen”; Sievers 1997, 271-276; Van Ooteghem 1964, 148: “Ce serait d’ailleurs une erreur de penser que la réforme de Marius concernant l’enrôlement était une totale innovation.” *Contra* Matthew 2010, 9: “The opening of the legions to volunteers was a departure from the standard practice of only enlisting the propertied classes via the *dilectus*.”

²⁴ Ps. Aur. Victor *De Vir. Ill.* 73.

²⁵ See De Ligt 2012, 153-154; Roselaar 2009, 609-623. According to Liv. 31.49.5, Scipio Africanus’ veterans received two *iugera* for each year served. Regarding the number of years they served, this means between two and twenty *iugera*. Cf. Schneider 1977, 58 ff.

²⁶ Broadhead 2007, 148-163.

Table 1: Evidence for Property Qualification Ratings²⁷

Class	Figure
First	<p><u>125,000 asses</u>: Gellius <i>Noctes Atticae</i>, 6.13.1; 16.10.10.</p> <p><u>120,000 asses</u>: Festus <i>De verborum significatione</i>, p 100L, s.v. <i>infra classem</i>; Pliny <i>Naturalis Historia</i>, 33.43.</p> <p><u>100,000 asses</u>: Livy 1.43; Dionysius 4.16-21; Polybius 6.19.2; 6.23.15; Gaius <i>Inst.</i> 2274.</p>
Second	<u>75,000 asses</u> : Livy 1.43; Dionysius 4.16-21.
Third	<u>50,000 asses</u> : Livy 1.43; Dionysius 4.16-21.
Fourth	<u>25,000 asses</u> : Livy 1.43; Dionysius 4.16-21.
Fifth	<p><u>12,500 asses</u>: Dionysius 4.16-21.</p> <p><u>11,000 asses</u>: Livy 1.43.</p> <p><u>4,000 asses</u>: Polybius 6.19.2; 6.23.15.</p> <p><u>1,500 asses</u>: Gellius <i>Noctes Atticae</i>, 6.13.1; 16.10.10.</p> <p><u>1,500 asses</u>: Cicero <i>De Republica</i>, 2.40.</p> <p><u>1,500 asses</u>: Nonius 228L.</p>

Alleged Tactical and Technical Reforms

Scholars often assume that Marius standardized equipment as part of his comprehensive military reforms. Since allowing landless men into the army meant equipping them, it would have been easier to give them all the same equipment. The evidence for such an argument is very slim. In spite of this, ever since the 19th century, modern historiography has supported

²⁷ Matthew 2006, 5, includes two other references that may, according to him, have indicated the census of the first class: Cass. Dio 56.10.2; Pseudo-Asconius 247-8. Both indicate 100,000 asses according to Matthew.

the idea that Marius discarded citizen cavalry and light infantry in order to create a legion entirely made up of heavy infantry no longer reflecting the differences in wealth among citizens in terms of the equipment they could afford.²⁸

The evidence to support the argument of uniformity of equipment rests on the following sources. A passage in Festus claims that soldiers used to fight with round shields (*parmulae* or *parmae*) but that Marius changed these for *Bruttiani* that is Bruttian shields.²⁹ Mommsen proposed that *Bruttiani* referred to a type of heavy shield used by the *socii* and adopted by legionaries under Marius. However, previously only *velites* fought with *parmulae*.³⁰ For this reason it has been proposed that *milites* should be corrected as *velites* but such a correction finds no support in the literary evidence.³¹ Even if the original *milites* is preferred, the text is rather vague, and it is unclear what type of shield is meant by *Bruttiani*.

Moreover, Plutarch credits Marius with the modification of the *pilum*. According to this author, Marius removed one of the two iron nails holding the iron head into the shaft and replaced it with a wooden pin. The idea was that this pin could break when the *pilum* would hit an enemy shield, making the iron head bend and thus preventing the enemy soldier from using his shield effectively. The evidence from Festus and Plutarch hardly represents the standardization of equipment argued by modern scholarship. Besides, Plutarch mentions that the modification of the *pilum* was done with the specific aim of fighting the Cimbri, in other words as an *ad hoc* improvisation, not carried out in the context of a wider programme.³² Hence, the argument for uniformity of equipment implemented by Marius rests on limited and tenuous evidence.

²⁸ Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* (1857 ed.), 4.6 192: “Wer überhaupt als Legionär zugelassen ward, bedurfte keiner weiteren Qualifikation, um in jeder Abteilung zu dienen; über die Einordnung entschied einzig das Ermessen der Offiziere. Alle Unterschiede der Bewaffnung fielen weg und somit wurden auch alle Rekruten gleichmäßig geschult.” Matthew 2006 11-12; 2010, 29-38.

²⁹ Festus 274 L: “Soldiers used to fight with small bucklers. The use of which C. Marius has abolished, with Bruttians given in their place” (*Parmulis pugnare milites soliti sunt. Quarum usum sustulit C. Marius datis in vicem earum Bruttianis*). It is unclear whether *milites* in this case refers to *some* soldiers or *all* the soldiers.

³⁰ Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, (1876 ed), 423: “Dazu kommt, dass Marius auch in anderer Beziehung als Reformator des Kriegswesens bekannt ist; er war es, der das *pilum* veränderte und zur gemeinsamen Waffe aller Legionarier machte, während vor ihm die Triarier mit der *hasta* bewaffnet waren, der die *parma* bei den Auxiliartruppen abschaffte und eine neue Art das Gepäck zu tragen einführte”; 423, note 8: “Diese Neuerung scheint sich auf die Bewaffnung der *socii* zu beziehen, da in der Legion bruttische Schilde nicht vorkommen konnten.”

³¹ Aigner 1974, 15. The correction was proposed by Schulten 1928, 240.

³² Plu. Mar. 25: “And it is said that it was in preparation for this battle that Marius introduced an innovation in the structure of the javelin. Up to this time, it seems, that part of the shaft which was let into the iron head was fastened there by two iron nails; but now, leaving one of these as it was, Marius removed the other, and put in its place a wooden pin that could easily be broken. His design was that the javelin, after striking the enemy’s shield, should not stand straight out, but that the wooden peg should break, thus allowing the shaft to bend in the iron head and trail along the ground, being held fast by the twist at the point of the weapon.” (λέγεται δὲ εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν μάχην πρῶτον ὑπὸ Μαρίου καινοτομηθῆναι τὸ περὶ τοὺς ὕσσους. τὸ γὰρ εἰς τὸν σίδηρον ἔμβλημα τοῦ ξύλου πρότερον μὲν ἦν δυοὶ περόναις κατειλημμένον σιδηραῖς, τότε δὲ ὁ Μάριος τὴν μὲν, ὥσπερ εἶχεν, εἶασε, τὴν δ’ ἐτέραν ἐξελὼν ξύλινον ἥλον εὐθραυστον ἀντ’ αὐτῆς ἐνέβαλε, τεχνάζων προοπεσόντα τὸν ὕσσον τῷ θυρεῷ τοῦ πολεμίου μὴ μένειν ὀρθόν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ξυλίνου κλασθέντος ἥλου καμπὴν γίνεσθαι περὶ τὸν σίδηρον καὶ παρέλκεσθαι τὸ δόρυ, διὰ τὴν στρεβλότητα τῆς αἰχμῆς ἐνεχόμενον).

As briefly mentioned earlier, some sources say that P. Rutilius Rufus (cos. 105) used gladiatorial instructors (*doctoribus gladiatorum*) to help train the troops in parrying and dealing blows.³³ This was done in the aftermath of the disastrous Roman defeat at Arausio at the hands of the Cimbri and Teutons, in which the Romans lost 80,000 soldiers according to Livy.³⁴ For a long time, modern historiography has argued that P. Rutilius Rufus' measure was part of the Marian reforms.³⁵ Yet, this is an argument from silence, as there is no evidence to link this innovation to Marius. Perhaps most famously, Marius has been credited with the introduction of training and of a kit that allowed soldiers the ability to transport their equipment and gave his men the nickname "Marian mules."³⁶ Yet according to Plutarch, there was also an alternative origin story: Marius, when serving as a young man at the siege of Numantia, impressed his commanding officer Scipio by the care he took of his mule and horse so much so that Scipio then praised laborious men as Marian mules.³⁷

These measures attest the well-known fact that during the Roman Republic, discipline and training were dependent on the generals in command. For example, in 204, in order to refute the claim that he was not maintaining strict discipline in his army, Scipio (the future Africanus) conducted elaborate military manoeuvres.³⁸ Furthermore, in 168, shortly before the battle of Pydna, Aemilius Paullus instructed his men to take good care of their weapons and to be in good physical condition.³⁹ In addition, when Scipio Aemilianus took command of the army in Spain in 134, he implemented stricter discipline and restricted the use of pack animals to the bare minimum. He also trained his men in various exercises to better prepare them for what was to come.⁴⁰ Nothing indicates that the use of gladiatorial instructors by P. Rutilius Rufus was permanent; it should be seen as following the various measures mentioned above. It is more likely that Rutilius Rufus was simply trying to avoid another disaster after the catastrophe of Arausio rather than operating along the lines of a wide-ranging programme of reforms implemented by Marius. As for the "Marian mules," the account of Marius given by Plutarch is quite similar to that of Appian for Scipio Aemilianus. Both Aemilianus and Marius

³³ Frontin. *Str.* 4.2.2; Val. Max. 2.3.2; "The handling practice of weapons was taught to soldiers from P. Rutilius, consul, colleague of Cn. Mallius, onwards: Without following the example of any general before himself, through gladiatorial instructors from the school of M. Aurelius Scaurus he generalised in the legions a more subtle method of avoiding hits and of hitting." (*Armorum tractandorum meditatio a P. Rutilio consule Cn. Malli collega militibus est tradita: is enim nullius ante se imperatoris exemplum secutus ex ludo C. Aureli Scauri doctoribus gladiatorum arcessitis vitandi atque inferendi ictus subtiliorem rationem legionibus ingeneravit*).

³⁴ Liv. *Per.* 67.

³⁵ Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* (1857 ed.), 4.6 192; Veith and Kromayer 1928, 378; Heuss 1963, 205.

³⁶ Plu. *Mar.* 13.1: "Setting out on the expedition, he laboured to perfect his army as it went along, practising the men in all kinds of running and in long marches, and compelling them to carry their own baggage and to prepare their own food." (Ἐν δὲ τῇ στρατείᾳ τὴν δύναμιν διεπόνει καθ' ὅδον ἐξασκῶν δρόμοις τε παντοδαποῖς καὶ μακραῖς ὁδοιπορίαις, ἑαυτῷ δὲ ἀχθοφορεῖν ἀναγκάζων καὶ αὐτουργεῖν τὰ πρὸς τὴν διαίταν). Frontin. *Str.* 4.1.7; Fest. 135 L.

³⁷ Plu. *Mar.* 13.2.

³⁸ Liv. 29.22.1-3.

³⁹ Liv. 44.34.3.

⁴⁰ App. *Hisp.* 6.85: "He forbade them to ride on mules when on the march." (ἀπέπε δὲ καὶ ὀδεύοντας ἡμιόνους ἐπικαθέζεσθαι); 86: "In spite of all this he did not venture to engage the enemy until he had trained his men by many laborious exercises." (Οὐ μὲν οὐδ' ὥς ἐτόλμα πολεμεῖν πρὶν αὐτοὺς γυμνάσαι πόνοις πολλοῖς).

introduced strict discipline and training as well as limiting the number of pack animals, in other words both men were doing what was expected of good Roman generals.

Scholars have also credited Marius with the invention of the cohort (*cohors*), a unit of ca. 500 men, which replaced the smaller and older manipule (*manipulus*) of 120 men.⁴¹ However, there are several instances where cohorts are mentioned before Marius. There are numerous references to them in Livy, with additional occurrences in Polybius.⁴² Cohorts are also mentioned in action in Africa during the War against Jugurtha before Marius took command, indicating that he was not responsible for this innovation.⁴³ Moreover, there is nothing in the sources supporting the idea that Marius would be the author of such a quick change in tactical units. It seems incorrect to argue that cohorts were a Marian innovation necessary to defeat the Cimbri and the Teutons as certain historians have proposed.⁴⁴ These peoples relied on an initial fearsome charge to overcome their opponents. However, this tactic is similar to that used by Gallic tribes, enemies the Romans faced and defeated many times before without the need to change the manipular system.⁴⁵ More recently it has been argued that the manipule and the cohort could actually have existed together and that the development of the latter had nothing to do with Marius. Both maniples and cohorts were different ways of adapting to different tactical situations and the latter was not the product of encountering enemies fighting in a style unknown to the Romans.⁴⁶

In sum, to attribute the invention of the cohort to Marius because its development is nowhere explicitly attested, is to make an argument *e silentio*. Even more problematic is the fact that it argues against all the available evidence attesting the existence of cohorts before

⁴¹ A view most recently defended by Matthew 2010, 29-37. Regrettably, this author mostly ignores academic works in languages other than English in his monograph on Marius' reforms. See also Keppie 1984, 43 ff; Carney 1961, 31-33, and Parker 1928.

⁴² Liv. 14.1; 14.7; 14.10; 15.1; 19.9; 19.10; 20.3; 20.5; 25.39.1; 27.18.10; 28.13.8; 28.14.17; 28.23.8; 28.25.15; 28.33.12; 34.12.6; 34.15.1. Cadiou 2001, 176, claims to have identified 27 instances in the first decade of Livy but admits that their meaning is ambiguous for this time period. Bell 1965, 404-422; Pol. 11.23.1: "the usual number of *velites* and three maniples (a combination of troops which the Romans call a cohort)". (καὶ πρὸ τούτων γροσφομάχους τοὺς εἰθισμένους καὶ τρεῖς σπείρας - τοῦτο δὲ καλεῖται τὸ σύνταγμα τῶν πεζῶν παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις κοόρτις); 11.33.1: "he led his main force from the camp in four cohorts, and attacked the infantry." (ἄγων ἐκ τῆς παρεμβολῆς ἐπὶ τέτταρας κοόρτις προσέβαλε τοῖς πεζοῖς). See also Sage 2008, 199-204.

⁴³ Sall. *Iug.* 38.6: "*cohors Ligurum*"; 77.4: "*cohortes Ligurum*"; Erdkamp 2006, 45, *contra* Keppie 1984, 44.

⁴⁴ Matthew 2010, 29-38; Watson 1969, 22; Parker 1928, 26-28.

⁴⁵ Pol. 2.33.1; McCall 2002, 103; Bell 1965, 409-414.

⁴⁶ Cadiou 2001, 168: "A mon sens, on ne peut écarter la possibilité d'un véritable emploi tactique régulier de la cohorte dès la Seconde Guerre Punique, dont le domaine hispanique, pour des raisons que nous allons développer, conserve davantage la trace que d'autres théâtres d'opérations"; 175-176: "Pas plus que l'opposition tactique de la cohorte et du manipule, l'exception hispanique n'apparaît donc clairement dans les sources. Si la manière de combattre des Barbares, et notamment des Celtibères, avait contribué à imposer le recours exclusif à une nouvelle formule tactique, il est curieux que les récits liviens pour 185 et 182 ne fassent aucune référence à la cohorte comme parade au *cuneus*, alors même qu'il s'agit là de deux des descriptions de bataille parmi les plus détaillées que nous possédons pour l'*Hispania* de cette époque et que nous connaissons par Polybe le recours à la cohorte en péninsule Ibérique depuis au moins 206. A l'inverse, il n'apparaît nullement gênant à Bell que cette mention polybienne, la moins ambiguë de celles dont nous disposons, prenne place à l'intérieur du récit de la bataille d'Ilipa, c'est-à-dire d'un affrontement en formation contre une armée carthaginoise où l'infanterie lourde africaine, et non sa composante indigène, est présentée comme l'élite des troupes."

the time of Marius. Arguing in favour of a long development seems a more prudent and realistic way of interpreting the sources available, rather than trying to fit the introduction of the cohort in some sort of Marian package deal.

As alluded to before, it is frequently thought that the *velites* disappeared as a result of Marius abolishing the property qualification. Some scholars point out that *velites* are supposedly last mentioned in Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum*.⁴⁷ M.J.W. Bell claimed that “*velites* had wholly disappeared by the time of Caesar.”⁴⁸ According to him, Lucullus was the commander responsible for their disappearance.⁴⁹ There is no doubt that light infantry continued to be used afterwards, as such units are often mentioned after Marius, and not always with the caveat that they are foreign *auxilia*.⁵⁰ Indeed, it is sometimes unclear whether the vocabulary used to describe light infantry refers to citizens or foreign auxiliaries. For example, the light infantry of Sulla in Greece during his campaign there in 86 is described as *levem armaturam*.⁵¹ It seems imprudent to argue that Marius simply disbanded *velites* since there is no compelling evidence that he did. It is quite unlikely that *velites* suddenly disappeared; their gradual disappearance was probably accelerated by the extraordinary circumstances of the Social and civil wars in which an increasing number of non-Romans were pressed into service.⁵²

The argument for the dissolution of the citizen cavalry mostly follows the same reasoning used to explain the alleged disbandment of the *velites*. Indeed, Roman and Italian cavalry are also supposedly last mentioned in Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum*.⁵³ However, as for the *velites*, it is difficult to draw a clear line around the use of the word *auxilia* by Sallust, as he seems to use it both for Italian allies and foreign auxiliaries.⁵⁴ It is thought that Roman citizen cavalry

⁴⁷ Sall. *Iug.* 46.7: “Accordingly, he himself led the van with the light-armed cohorts as well as a picked body of slingers and archers, his lieutenant Gaius Marius with the cavalry had charge of the rear, while on both flanks he had apportioned the cavalry of the auxiliaries to the tribunes of the legions and the prefects of the cohorts. With these the light-armed troops (*velites*) were mingled” (*itaque ipse cum expeditis cohortibus, item funditorum et sagittariorum delecta manu apud primos erat, in postremo C. Marius legatus cum equitibus curabat, in utrumque latus auxiliarios equites tribunis legionum et praefectis cohortium dispertuerat, ut cum iis permixti velites*.) See also: Keppie 1984, 66; Harmand 1967, 39-41.

⁴⁸ Bell 1965, 19. See also Sage 2008, 204-206.

⁴⁹ Bell 1965, 20.

⁵⁰ Ps.-Caes. *BH* 22.7; *BH* 26.1

⁵¹ Frontin. *Str.* 2.3.17: “Next he arranged a triple line of infantry, leaving intervals through which to send, according to need, the light-armed troops and the cavalry, which he placed in the rear.” (*triplicem deinde peditum aciem ordinavit relictis intervallis, per quae levem armaturam et equitem, quem in novissimo conlocaverat, cum res exegisset, emitteret*.)

⁵² See Saddington 1982; Yoshimura 1961, 473-495

⁵³ Sall. *Iug.* 95.1: “During the attack on the fortress the quaestor Lucius Sulla arrived in camp with a large force of horsemen which he had mustered from Latium and the allies, having been left in Rome for that purpose.” (*ceterum, dum ea res geritur, L. Sulla quaestor cum magno equitatu in castra venit, quos uti ex Latio et a sociis cogeret, Romae relictus erat*.) See also: Carney 1961, 32; Parker 1928, 43.

⁵⁴ Sall. *Iug.* 39.2: “but in the meantime he enrolled reinforcements, summoned aid from the allies and the Latin peoples.” (*et tamen interim exercitui supplementum scribere, ab sociis et nomine Latino auxilia arcessere*); 43.4: “Furthermore, in making these preparations the Senate aided him by its sanctions, allies, Latin cities, and kings by the voluntary contribution of auxiliaries.” (*Ceterum ad ea patranda senatus auctoritate, socii nomenque Latinum et reges ultro auxilia mittendo*); 90.2: “He gave all the cattle which had been captured on previous days to the auxiliary

eventually disappears in the course of the first century—it is often emphasized that Caesar had no Roman cavalry in Gaul as he mostly relied on Gallic horsemen provided by friendly tribes.⁵⁵ However, in light of the evidence presented above, it is imprudent to jump to the conclusion that this is the result of the Marian reforms. To tie this phenomenon to Marius is to ignore the evidence mentioning citizen cavalry after Marius.

Indeed, other sources indicate that the Jugurthine War did not see the sudden disappearance of Roman cavalry. For instance, Valerius Maximus mentions Roman horsemen (*Romani equites*) being routed by the Cimbri in 102.⁵⁶ Another reference is provided by Suetonius, when he claims that the grammarian L. Orbilius Pupillus served in the cavalry, probably in the late 90s.⁵⁷ Furthermore, before the battle of Pharsalus in 48, Plutarch mentions that Pompey's cavalry included the “flower of Rome and Italy” (Ῥωμαίων καὶ Ἰταλῶν τὸ ἀνθοῦν).⁵⁸ These references do not support the theory that Marius disbanded the Roman citizen cavalry. Additionally, the Social War probably had an impact on the recruitment of Roman cavalry: according to Polybius the *socii* normally provided three times more cavalry than Rome did.⁵⁹ Deprived of this, the recourse to auxiliaries in this context must have been a necessity to fill tactical gaps in the Roman army. This certainly played a role in the diminishing importance of Roman citizen cavalry.

Moreover, it has been proposed that the second century provided other opportunities for prestige for young Roman nobles that lessened the importance of cavalry service.⁶⁰ These

cavalry to drive” (*Pecus omne quod superioribus diebus praedae fuerat equitibus auxiliariis agendum adtribuit*); 100.4: “sent the auxiliary cavalry before the camp.” (*pro castris equites auxilarios mittere*.)

⁵⁵ Caes. BG 1.42. However, see the objections of Cadiou 2016, 61–62.

⁵⁶ Val. Max. 5.8.4: “A body of Roman horsemen who were routed by a Cimbrian attack at the river Athesis fled in terror to Rome deserting Consul Catulus.” (*cum apud Athesim flumen impetu Cimbrorum Romani equites puls, deserto Catulo, urbem pauidi repeterent*). Although the text says *urbem* and not *Romae*, it is reasonable to think (as the Loeb translation does) that Valerius refers to “the *urbs*” i.e. Rome, since *Romani equites* are mentioned before. Also: Rankov 2007, 32–33.

⁵⁷ Suet. *Gramm.* 9: “at first earned a living as an attendant on the magistrates. He then served as a subaltern in Macedonia, and later in the cavalry.” (*primo apparituram magistratibus fecit; deinde in Macedonia corniculo, mox equo meruit*). There is also the mention in Plu. *Sulla* 29.5, of the most illustrious young men of Rome attacking Sulla's troops on horseback during his second march on the city. Also: McCall 2002, 101; Nicolet 1966, 965.

⁵⁸ Plu. *Pomp.* 64.1.

⁵⁹ Pol. 6.26.7: “The total number of allied infantry is usually equal to that of the Romans, while the cavalry are three times as many.” (τὸ δὲ πλῆθος γίνεται τὸ πᾶν τῶν συμμάχων, τὸ μὲν τῶν πεζῶν ἄρισον τοῖς Ῥωμαϊκοῖς στρατοπέδοις ὥς τὸ πολὺ, τὸ δὲ τῶν ἵππῶν τριπλάσιον).

⁶⁰ On the demilitarization of the Roman nobility in the late republic, see Blösel 2011, 55–80; Morstein-Marx 2004; McCall 2002, 118–122; David 1992; 2011, 157–171, esp. 160: “La conjonction de tous ces phénomènes donna à l'éloquence judiciaire une position de premier plan dans la vie politique de la République des deux derniers siècles avant notre ère: d'une part, l'activité judiciaire en se développant devenait un des lieux majeurs de la compétition et de l'affrontement entre membres de l'aristocratie et de l'autre, elle s'ouvrait, techniquement et juridiquement, à des individus qui ne lui appartenaient pas et qui pouvaient imaginer jouer un rôle politique. La compétence rhétorique tenait une place décisive dans ce processus”; McCall 2002, 118–123, esp. 121: “For the aspiring or established aristocrat, advocacy as a means to acquire a reputation also had some distinct advantages over cavalry service. The advocate ingratiated himself with clients by protecting their interests in court, and these services could potentially translate into future votes. Furthermore, the advocate was continually present at

opportunities notably included the growing importance of advocacy and rhetoric, as well as the monetization of the Roman economy and the growing importance of wealth in politics.⁶¹ This shift happened gradually: it was not the result of wide-ranging reforms done by Marius who transformed the cavalry into a non-citizen professional force.⁶² The disappearance of Roman citizen cavalry is thus a complex phenomenon that occurred over a long period of time.

The Army after Marius

More generally, the analysis of the evidence after Marius indicates no sudden and wide-ranging change in military practice. That is, the bulk of the army still appears to have been drawn from propertied classes, with little reliance on *proletarii*. For instance, the army of Lucullus operating against King Mithridates VI seemed to have comprised few *proletarii*. According to Appian, when Lucullus was ultimately relieved from command, his soldiers were ordered to be dismissed by the proconsul of Asia. Those refusing to comply would risk having their property confiscated. Upon hearing this, only a small number of soldiers chose to stay with Lucullus, being too poor to feel threatened by the sanction.⁶³ Lucullus' army thus seemed to have comprised only a few *proletarii* and his soldiers were probably recruited according to the traditional manner. This shows that Marius' levy of *proletarii* did not have the profound impact that modern scholars attributed to him. As noted earlier, there were precedents for recruiting *proletarii* and even slaves.

Rome and, therefore, was highly visible to the electorate, whereas the cavalryman's deeds occurred far away and had to be reported to Rome to have any effect. The proximity of the advocate to the voters could be a potential advantage in electoral contests. Finally, the perceived value of distinguishing oneself in battle may have diminished as the social composition of the Roman legions changed." See also Cic. *Mur.* 19–21.

⁶¹ Cf. H. Beck, M. Jehne, J. Serrati, (eds.) 2016 *Money and Power in the Roman Republic*; Rosenstein 2008, 1–26. See the remarks of Blösel 2011, 72–73: "Der Redner [i.e. Cic. *Planc.* 65 f.] hat nach eigener Aussage aus der Erkenntnis, daß die Römer nur schlechte Ohren, aber sehr gute Augen hätten, für sich die Konsequenz gezogen, die Hauptstadt möglichst nicht mehr für längere Zeiten zu verlassen, sondern förmlich auf dem Forum zu wohnen und für jedermann zugänglich zu sein. Um so größer war Ciceros Klage, als er dann doch im Jahr 51 eine Statthalterschaft im fernen Kilikien antreten mußte. Hinter der Apologie, daß wahrer Ruhm ohnehin nur in Rom selbst zu gewinnen sei, verbirgt sich doch ein sicherlich repräsentatives Zeugnis für die kaum zu überschätzende Unlust der meisten *nobiles*, für mehr als ein paar Wochen all der hauptstädtischen Annehmlichkeiten, Gespräche und Neuigkeiten zu entbehren. Wichtiger war jedoch noch, daß bei einer Abwesenheit von einem oder gar mehr Jahren Einbußen im finanziellen wie im politischen Bereich drohten." See also Rosentsein 2016, 114–130; Rosillo López 2010; Walter 2010, 145–166; Yakobson 1999. Frank 1933, is still useful for the collection of sources pertaining to economic matters.

⁶² Sage 2008, 206–208; McCall 2002, 13–25. The Polybian requirement of ten campaigns to be able to hold any political office attested in Pol. 6.19.2 is likely to have progressively been abandoned.

⁶³ App. *Mithr.* 90: "When Lucullus was already encamped near Mithridates, the proconsul of Asia sent heralds to proclaim that Rome had accused Lucullus of unnecessarily prolonging the war, and had ordered that the soldiers under him be dismissed and that the property of those who did not obey this order should be confiscated. When this information was received the army disbanded at once, except a few who remained with Lucullus because they were very poor and did not fear the penalty." (ὁ τῆς Ἀσίας στρατηγὸς περιπέμπων ἐκήρυσσε Ῥωμαίους ἐπικαλεῖν Λευκόλλω πέρα τοῦ δέοντος πολεμοῦντι, καὶ τοὺς ὑπ' αὐτῷ τῆς στρατείας ἀφιέναι, καὶ τῶν οὐ πειθομένων τὰ ὄντα δημεύσειν. ὧν ἐξαγγελθέντων ὁ στρατὸς αὐτίκα διελύετο, χωρὶς ὀλίγων. ὅσοι πάνυ πένητες ὄντες καὶ τὴν ζημίαν οὐ δεδιότες τῷ Λευκόλλῳ παρέμενον.) See also Tröster 2008, 125–6.

It is shortly before and during the civil wars that we do hear of major changes in recruitment practice in the sources. For example, in 83 Pompey recruited three legions at his own expense without even holding *imperium*, in order to help Sulla, something much more exceptional than Marius' levy.⁶⁴ However, the most notable novelty in the last decades of the Roman Republic was the recruitment of large numbers of non-Romans not only as auxiliaries but also as legionaries. Consequently, entire legions were recruited among provincials. For example, Caesar levied a legion of Transalpine Gauls during his Gallic campaign (called *Alaudae*).⁶⁵ After he had fled Italy, Pompey incorporated large numbers of local inhabitants in his legions, no doubt because there were not enough Roman citizens living in the provinces he controlled; therefore, Thessalians, Boeotians, Achaeans, Epirotes, Syrians and various other peoples were recruited as legionaries.⁶⁶ Before the battle of Philippi, Brutus recruited two legions entirely made up of Macedonians and trained them to fight in the Roman fashion.⁶⁷ This had a much bigger impact on the evolution of the Roman army than the recruitment of a limited number of *proletarii* by Marius. To be sure, by recruiting entire legions of non-citizens the Roman army was definitely moving away from a citizen militia and towards a professional army in which property qualifications no longer played a role in recruitment. Moreover, some of these units such as the *Legio V Alaudae* were kept under arms by Augustus and became part of the standing army he created.⁶⁸

Conclusion

To sum up, the implications of the "Marian reforms" have been greatly exaggerated by modern historiography. Several developments in the Roman army whose origin is not explicitly attested in the sources have been attributed to Marius, such as the replacement of *velites* and citizen cavalry by foreign auxiliaries. More importantly, Marius did not introduce a change in recruitment by abrogating all property qualifications for military service. He enrolled a limited body of troops for the war against Jugurtha, some of whom were *proletarii*, at a time in which Rome was hard pressed by the Cimbri and Teutons as well.

Post Marian evidence does not at all support the picture of a professional army made up of landless soldiers. To be sure, the Roman army did evolve and change; however it was not

⁶⁴ Plu. *Pomp.* 6.3: "Then he proceeded to levy soldiers, and after appointing centurions and commanders for them all in due form, made a circuit of the other cities, doing the same thing." (στρατιώτας κατέλεγε, καὶ λοχαγούς καὶ ταξιάρχους κατὰ κόσμον ἀποδείξας ἐκάστοις τὰς κύκλῳ πόλεις ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ποιῶν); 6.6: "so that in a short time he has mustered three complete legions, and provided them with food, baggage-waggons, carriages, and other needful equipment." (οὕτω κατανείμας ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ τρία τάγματα τέλεια, καὶ τροφήν πορίσας καὶ σκευαγωγὰ καὶ ἀμάξας καὶ τὴν ἄλλην πᾶσαν παρασκευήν).

⁶⁵ Suet. *Jul.* 24.2.

⁶⁶ Caes. *BC* 3.4; Plu. *Pomp.* 64.2; Cass. Dio 41.61.

⁶⁷ App. *BC* 3.79: "and since he approved the valour of the Macedonians he raised two legions amongst them, whom, too, he drilled in the Italian discipline" (καὶ Μακεδόνας ἐπαινῶν δύο τέλη κατέλεξεν ἐξ αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐς τὸν Ἰταλικὸν τρόπον καὶ τάδε ἐγυμνάζετο.)

⁶⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 1.45; Vell. Pat. 2.97.1. On the integration of republican auxiliaries in the imperial army, see Speidel 2016, 79-95.

Marius who transformed it. What did transform it were the crises of the late Roman Republic such as the Social War and the civil wars, topics themselves worthy of another paper. More generally, discussions on the fall of the republic often point out the Marian reforms as the beginning of the end. Indeed, according to some scholars, since Marius opened the legions to *proletarii*, this led to the establishment of armies entirely composed of such citizens.⁶⁹ These soldiers were entirely loyal to their generals rather than to the state because they were relying on the former for pay and rewards, since they possessed nothing else. This explains why Sulla's men agreed to march on Rome, thus creating a dangerous precedent and leading to a succession of civil wars that ultimately put an end to the Roman Republic.⁷⁰ However, this paper has tried to demonstrate that there is little convincing evidence for such "Marian" reforms, nor is there good evidence for the presence of large numbers of *proletarii* in the army after Marius. Of course, the armies of the civil wars were ruthless and prone to follow their leaders wherever they might lead them, but perhaps discussions on the end of the Roman Republic could benefit from investigating other, more textually substantial, causes.

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⁶⁹ Meier 1966: "Mit der Veränderung der Heeresverfassung ist jedenfalls ein neuer potentieller Machtfaktor in die römische Politik eingeführt worden, der nicht mehr recht in die überlieferte Verfassung passte [...]." On the existence of fierce competition among the aristocracy already in the Early and Middle Republic, see Bleckmann 2002, also Hölkeskamp 1993, 12-39.

⁷⁰ Keppie, 1984, 49.

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