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AUGUSTUS AND HIS LEGIONARIES.

IN the *Monumentum Ancyranum* Augustus makes some interesting and, if we can unravel them, undoubtedly important statements, from which certain deductions seem possible as to the number of his legionary soldiers, the rate of mortality among them, their length of service and the provisions made for them after their discharge. Quite early in the *Monument* (I. 16-19) we get the following general assertion: 'About five hundred thousand Roman citizens were bound to me by the military oath. Of these, after the due expiry of their service, I settled in colonies or sent back to their own *municipia* somewhat more than three hundred thousand. And to all of them I gave land purchased by myself, or in lieu of land sums of money out of my own resources.' From the place of this statement in that part of the record relating to his earlier career we might be tempted to infer (*a*) that the five hundred thousand legionaries were those who formed his armies at the time of Antony's collapse, and (*b*) that the discharge of three hundred thousand of them, whether planted in colonies or sent back to their domiciles, took place at one and the same time. With regard to the second point, we shall see presently that the vague and indiscriminate statement made here is cleared up by a later passage (III. 22 sqq.), from which it appears that the assignation of land belongs to two distinct schemes of colonization, separated by sixteen years, and that the restoration of discharged soldiers to their municipalities, to whom alone the words '*pecuniam pro agris dedi*' are applicable, belongs to a still later date. But these facts, not discoverable in the statement as it stands, negative the supposition that the five hundred thousand were those enlisted at or up to the date of 31 B.C. For, apart from the impossibility of assuming that Octavian had, or had had at that date, something like eighty-three legions, it is clear that Augustus wishes to represent the number of discharged soldiers provided for as three-fifths of the total number enlisted. It follows that by 2 B.C., the last date, as we shall see, at which discharged soldiers were provided for in considerable numbers, the total of those enlisted must have increased largely since thirty years earlier, and if it had been five hundred thousand then, the proportion given between the numbers of those enlisted and those provided for would have been in utter contradiction to the facts. Who, then, are included under the five hundred thousand Roman citizens who took the military oath to Augustus? It can hardly be doubted that the number included all those enlisted in the legions from some *terminus a quo* to be determined presently down to the date of the statement under consideration. It would follow that about one hundred and fifty thousand out of the total were actually serving at this latter date in the twenty-five legions, which

as we know from Tac. *Ann.* iv. 5 were in existence at the end of Augustus' reign. To establish an exact *terminus a quo* for the enlistment of the five hundred thousand is not so easy. But a practical starting-point can be found. All the legionaries who had formed Octavian's armies, both against Antony in 44 and 43 B.C. and in alliance with him during the Philippi campaign, must be eliminated. The bulk of them along with Antony's veterans had been disposed of by a series of land assignments, carried out not by purchase but by confiscation, and in short by methods which Augustus wished to be forgotten, not recorded. Of course, during the years which followed down to the final breach with Antony, Octavian had numerous legions in Gaul, in Spain, and in Illyricum. All these, we must suppose, and no doubt a large number of recruits from the western provinces joined in the oath of allegiance and service to Octavian, which, as he himself records, was taken by these provinces at the time when they called upon him to assume the command in the coming campaign, and when, in his own words, he was 'per consensum uniuersorum potitus omnium rerum.'

I conclude therefore that, in attempting to account for the total of five hundred thousand legionaries specified by Augustus, we must start from the situation in 32 or 31 B.C., and reckon as the first instalment towards that total the army, so far as it consisted of legions, which was under the command of Octavian, when Antony and Cleopatra fled to Egypt.

Whether Octavian added to his army any of the legions taken over from Lepidus or Antony is a question difficult to answer with certainty. From the fact that in the Augustan army there were three legions numbered III, and duplicates of IV, V, VI, and X, it may be inferred with some probability that at least six legions were taken over from these two armies.¹ But in the statement of the *Monument* under consideration Augustus is clearly concerned to make the proportion of soldiers provided for appear as large as possible in comparison with the number enlisted, and therefore, though these six legions had of course transferred their oath of allegiance to him, it seems to me very probable that he does not include them in the total of five hundred thousand. I shall at any rate assume this in the calculations which follow.

Of the legionary army, at the disposal of Augustus in 31 B.C., he retained a portion and discharged a portion. Those discharged, naturally the veterans, who had already served their time, were settled, in a manner to be discussed below, in Italian colonies. I am only concerned for the moment with the number so disposed of, and this seems to be indicated by a statement of Augustus that along with other largesses belonging to the year 29 B.C.

¹ Besides III Augusta there were III Gallica and III Cyrenaica, the former perhaps from the army of Antony, the latter from that of Lepidus. The duplicates were IV Macedonica and IV Scythica: V Alauda and V Macedonica: VI Val. Victr. and VI Ferrata, the latter always an Oriental legion: X Gemina and X Fretensis. Of course both Antony and Lepidus had a large number of legions, but these were probably for

the most part *uernaculae*, and perhaps even composed to some extent of slaves, like the army of Sex. Pompeius. If this was the case, we can understand why Augustus incorporated so few in his own army. They would not be of the best material. The slaves might be handed back to their masters, like those in the Sicilian army, while the rest would be simply disbanded.

'acceperunt triumphale congiarium in coloniis hominum circiter centum et uiginti milia' (III. 19). If this, as seems probable, refers to the newly settled military colonists of the previous year, we have accounted for one hundred and twenty thousand out of the three hundred thousand legionaries provided for. With regard to the legions retained by Augustus, I adhere to the view put forward by me many years ago (*Stud. in Rom. Hist.*, 1st series, pp. 162-179), that he had during the earlier portion of his reign twenty-two legions, sixteen of his own, numbered I to XVI, and the six already referred to taken over from the armies of Lepidus and Antony.¹ On the assumption that these were not counted among the five hundred thousand enlisted by Augustus himself, we get as the first contribution towards that total, 96,000 men, or, with the 120,000 legionary colonists added, 212,000. There remain 288,000, a figure which represents the total number of Roman citizens enlisting in the legions during the forty-four years from 30 B.C. to 14 A.D. We may take the average number of legions for the whole time as twenty-two, for, though there were twenty-five in the last five or six years, the legions newly raised in the Pannonian war would need few recruits during the short interval between their creation and 14 A.D., while the recruiting for some of the other legions must have been small at the end of the reign, if we may judge by the number of time-expired veterans retained on active service. On these figures then, it would seem, the average number of recruits for each legion every year was 293. But, as a matter of fact, there can hardly be said to have been an annual average, since the great bulk of the new soldiers must have been recruited in particular years or sets of years, which can be specified. Thus if, as we shall see reason to believe, nearly one hundred thousand veterans were settled on provincial land in or about 14 B.C., there must have been at this point exceptionally heavy recruiting to supply the gaps so caused. The same would be true, though perhaps to a less extent and spread over more years, when in the years following 7 B.C. large numbers of veterans were sent back to their domiciles with pensions. (See below.) Once more, between 6 and 10 A.D. no fewer than six fresh legions were enrolled (four in the Pannonian war and two after the Varian disaster), and this by itself would mean the raising of 36,000 recruits.

When we turn to the other side of the balance, it is clear that since four hundred and fifty thousand out of the five hundred thousand are accounted for, either by those still serving in 14 A.D. (150,000) or by those discharged and provided for (300,000), only fifty thousand are left to be classified as killed or disabled, or as having died during their years of service. It is no doubt true that, with the exception of the German campaigns of Drusus and Tiberius, the Pannonian campaigns of the latter, after Agrippa's death and the great Pannonian rebellion, there was no really heavy fighting during the reign. There was little otherwise beyond desultory frontier warfare and occasional punitive raids, and whatever losses there were, would in all probability fall more upon the auxiliary troops

¹ Mommsen held that in addition to these six Augustus only retained twelve of his own, and that legions XIII to XX were all created in the

course of the Pannonian rebellion. I have given reasons against this view in the paper referred to above.

than on the legions. But at the same time, when we remember that 18,000 were lost with Varus at one blow, and that the Pannonian war was 'grauissimum omnium externorum bellorum post Punica,' this total seems extraordinarily small. If the view taken above is accepted as probable, that the six duplicate legions were not included in the five hundred thousand, we can add 36,000 more to the casualty list, while a few thousands more can be added by supposing that the twenty-five legions were not all up to their full strength in 14 A.D., and that therefore 150,000 is an over-estimate.

The points, however, hitherto discussed, though deducible from the statement in the *Monument*, are not those on which Augustus himself intended to lay stress. What he is recording is the extremely large proportion of those who, having completed their term of service, were provided for by means of his liberality. He returns to this point, and at the same time clears up much that was left ambiguous in the general statement. In III. 22 sqq., Augustus declares: 'In my fourth consulship (30 B.C.), and afterwards in the consulship of M. Crassus and Gn. Lentulus the augur (14 B.C.), I handed over sums of money to the municipalities in payment for the land which I assigned to my soldiers. The total amount so paid was about six hundred million sesterces for Italian land, and about two hundred and sixty million sesterces for provincial land. Of all who ever planted colonies of soldiers in Italy or in the provinces, I was the first and only statesman down to my own age to take this course.'

It appears therefore that the settlement of soldiers on land mentioned in the earlier passage took place on two occasions, in 30 and in 14 B.C., while we shall see reason to connect the former with the purchase of Italian land, and the latter with the acquisition of land in the provinces. For the colonization in 30 B.C. we get valuable information from Hyginus (*de lim.* p. 77, Lachm.) and Dio Cassius (51, 4). Hyginus declares that Augustus, after restoring peace to the world, provided by means of colonization both for the armies of Antony and Lepidus, which had come over to him, and for the soldiers of his own legions. He goes on to specify three classes of colonies thus established. (a) The towns which had favoured Antony were practically cleared of their inhabitants, and repeopled by military colonists. (b) Old established communities received large numbers of military settlers, and with them the title of colonies. (c) Some ancient and obsolete foundations received large accessions of citizens and in some cases of land, and at the same time recovered their lost rank as colonies. On two points this statement probably needs correction and receives it from Dio Cassius. He makes it clear (1) that land was not assigned, as we should hardly expect that it would be, to the soldiers of Antony and Lepidus, but only to his own veterans (τοῖς διὰ πάντος αὐτῷ συστρατεύσασιν), and (2) that the colonies were in Italy only, and not, as Hyginus states, also in the provinces. Dio also supplies the omission of Hyginus to make it clear that the land required was, as Augustus himself declares, purchased. But it was clearly not all paid for, as the *Monument* would lead us to believe, but only in the case of those communities

which had not sided with Antony. Another detail is given by Dio which may possibly explain the words in 'prouinciis' in the account of Hyginus. It appears that the expropriated inhabitants of the hostile communities were allowed to settle at Dyrrachium, Philippi, and elsewhere. These were of course not military colonies, but it is by no means certain that they were not organized as civilian colonies; and as these settlements were in a way a necessary supplement to the scheme of Italian colonization, unless the dispossessed populations were to become a scandal and a danger, it is even possible that the purchase price of land in Macedonia and perhaps also in Illyricum was included under what otherwise seems the enormous sum of six hundred million sesterces. We have already inferred from III. 19 that the number of military colonists settled in Italy at this time was one hundred and twenty thousand, and the colonies so established were no doubt the twenty-eight 'meis auspiciis deductae,' which Augustus declares to have been in the highest degree flourishing and populous (V. 37).¹

With regard to the second assignment of land to soldiers in 14 B.C., or more strictly to the sums of money paid to municipalities in that year, there is evidence for connecting it, though Augustus does not himself explicitly connect it, with the purchase of provincial land. Under this year Dio Cassius makes an explicit statement which seems to place the matter beyond all doubt. 'At this time he colonized numerous cities in Gaul and Spain' (54, 23). During the earlier part of the reign the term of service was probably twenty years, so that there would be a large number of legionaries recruited just before Actium who in 14 B.C. would be impatiently expecting their *honesta missio*. Nor is it unlikely that a demand for a sixteen years' term was making itself heard.² Augustus, who at this time was in Gaul and had been in Spain, must have been aware of the temper of the legions in these provinces, and perhaps anticipating the twenty years' term of service by a few years, made the satisfaction of these demands fit in with his schemes of provincial organization by establishing or re-establishing numerous colonial foundations in the Spanish provinces and Narbonensis. In Pliny's lists, which

¹ In V. 35 Augustus enumerates the provinces in which he planted colonies of soldiers, and Mommsen is much exercised because, though Emona, Salona, Narona and Iader were colonies, Illyricum is absent from the list. Two possible reasons are suggested for its absence. (1) Illyricum was perhaps not a separate province, but under the administration of the governor of Macedonia. But between the treaty of Brundisium and the unification of the empire after Actium, Macedonia had belonged to Antony, and Illyricum to Octavian, and as Illyricum had become important through his own campaigns between 36 and 33 B.C., it is unlikely that he would have at once merged it in another province. In any case, Illyricum was certainly as much a separate province as Pisidia, which finds a place in the list. (2) Augustus may have promised his veterans lands in Italy, and then,

unable to get sufficient land to fulfil his promise, he may have settled some in Illyricum, a breach of promise which he would be anxious to keep out of sight, and therefore omits Illyricum from his list. On this it seems enough to ask, why, even if at the time he could persuade his veterans that they were settled in Italy, when they were really in Illyricum, should he still have had recourse to this futile expedient in drawing up his record forty-four years later? I make the suggestion, for what it is worth, that these places in Illyricum were not military colonies at all, but are covered by Dio's 'elsewhere,' and that, like Dyrrachium and Philippi, they received settlements of dispossessed Italians.

² This, as we shall see, was granted in 13 B.C., in consequence no doubt of urgent demands on the part of the soldiers.

here represent the Augustan period, Baetica is credited with nine colonies, Tarraconensis with twelve, and Lusitania with five, and though many of these were Caesarian, even these may have received fresh colonists from Augustus at this time. In Narbonensis, so far as we can judge, there is little room for fresh foundations, so thorough had been Caesar's scheme of colonization. But many Latin colonies may have become Roman with accessions of military colonists.

Of course the colonization of this year may have extended to some of the other provinces specified by Augustus in V. 35, and not been limited to Spain and Gaul, and at any rate all soldiers settled would be included under the *trecenta milia*. But it cannot be supposed that all the military colonies in the provinces dated from the same year. Nor does Augustus imply this. He merely states that the payment of two hundred and sixty million sesterces was made in this year. The liability for some of this money may have been incurred in years antecedent to 14 B.C., though the new policy adopted in the following year (see below) makes it impossible to place any of the Augustan military colonies later than this time. There is no confirmation of the statement that the land required for these colonies was paid for, but it may well have been true as regards those in Gaul and Spain, where Augustus had considerable financial resources at his disposal. At the same time, it is difficult to believe that, when military colonies were established in Pisidia, payment for the land was made to the tribes, for whose coercion they were planted. We have therefore no means of determining with any exactitude either how many of the *trecenta milia* were provided for in 14 B.C., or how many were settled at the cost of two hundred and sixty million sesterces. No doubt provincial land was cheaper than Italian, and if six hundred million sesterces could purchase enough of the latter for one hundred and twenty thousand, we might suggest that two hundred and sixty million provide for not less than eighty thousand on the former, but such an estimate is clearly too uncertain to be of any use. It may be, however, that a consideration of the next statement in the *Monument* may lead us to an approximate estimate of the total number provided for by provincial colonies, whether all were paid for out of the sum given by Augustus or not.

As has been already pointed out, a very large number of recruits must have joined the legions about this time. The twenty-two legions would number about 132,000 men, and at the lowest estimate more than half of these were discharged in or shortly before 14 B.C. An equivalent number therefore must have been enlisted about the same time.

This extensive colonization had no doubt been a necessary step, but it had also been a laborious and costly task, and Augustus was not willing to face it again. He accordingly announced a new policy which, while lessening the rewards attaching to *honesta missio*, made them more definite and certain, and shortened the length of service required to qualify for them. Under the year 13 B.C. Dio Cassius states (54, 25): 'He promulgated rules as to the number of years the citizens should serve in the army, and as to the amount of money they

should receive as a reward when discharge from service in lieu of the land which they were always demanding. His object was that the soldiers, being enlisted henceforth on certain definite terms, should find no excuse for revolt on this score. The number of years was 12 for praetorians, and 16 for the rest, while the money to be distributed was less in some cases and more in others. 'It is not of course necessary to suppose that land was never given after this date, for the complaints made by some of the mutineers in 14 A.D. imply that it sometimes was, but it never could have been on a large scale, and the system was now for each soldier on discharge to receive a sum of money.

During the years which followed there was some of the heaviest and most prolonged fighting of the reign in the German wars of Drusus and Tiberius and the Pannonian campaigns of the latter, and in the west at any rate there can have been little opportunity of working the new system. But it was worked on a somewhat extensive scale in the years following 7 B.C., as the next record in the *Monument* informs us (III. 28 sqq.).

'And afterwards in the consulship of Tib. Nero and Gn. Piso, and A. Antistius and D. Laelius, and of G. Calvisius and L. Pasienus, and of L. Lentulus and M. Messalla, and of L. Caninius and Q. Fabricius, I bestowed rewards in money on the soldiers whom, after the completion of their service, I sent back to their own *municipia*. And for this purpose with ungrudging liberality I expended four hundred million sesterces.' This clears up another ambiguity in the general statement of I. 16, and shows that the words '*pecuniam pro agris*' refer to those soldiers only who were sent back to their *municipia*. The years during which this gradual discharge of soldiers took place were 7, 6, 4, 3 and 2 B.C., 5 B.C. being perhaps omitted owing to a large sum distributed to the people (there were 320,000 recipients of 60 *denarii*) when G. Caesar assumed the *toga virilis*. If we knew the amount of pension fixed for legionaries in 13 B.C., we could of course determine the number of men discharged during these five years. All that we know is that in 5 A.D. Augustus again lengthened the term of service to twenty years, and at the same time fixed the retiring allowance for legionaries at 12,000 sesterces (Dio Cass. 55, 25). As a compensation for the increased length of service, we may assume that Augustus appreciably augmented the money allowance, and if we conjecture that it had been fixed at 6,000 sesterces in 13 B.C. we shall probably be not far from the truth. On that computation about 66,000 would have been discharged and rewarded during the five years specified by Augustus. This figure, added to the 120,000 settled in 30 B.C., accounts for 188,000 out of the *trecenta milia*, and leaves 112,000, which will have to include all the military colonies in the provinces, and also any soldiers discharged after 6 A.D. and receiving from the newly established *aerarium militare* the 12,000 sesterces fixed in the previous year. These would not be very numerous for reasons given below, but their necessary inclusion adds to our difficulty in determining the number provided for by the four hundred million sesterces paid out between 7 and 2 B.C.

A question, to which no entirely satisfactory answer can be supplied, is how there came to be 66,000 men with sixteen years' service at their back

between 7 and 2 B.C., for that number amounts to exactly half the total legionary force at the time, twenty-two legions. It would mean that these men, if at the time of their discharge they had completed their term of service, must have been enlisted from 23 to 18 B.C. But there is not a trace of any great military activity at that date to account for such exceptional recruiting during those years. Moreover, these men would have been serving in 14 B.C., when, as we have seen, something like 80,000 men were settled on provincial land. But in this case we should have to assume that at the opening of 14 B.C. the legionary force consisted of 66,000 men whose length of service ranged from nine to four years, and about 80,000 who were to be discharged in the course of the year, in other words of little short of 150,000. How is this possible at a time when there were only twenty-two legions? I can only suggest that the words of Augustus, 'after the completion of their service,' are not to be pressed, and that a large proportion of the 66,000 now discharged had been enlisted as recently as 14 B.C., and that their discharge was due not to length of service, but to the severity of the German and Pannonian and perhaps Thracian and Moesian fighting since 13 B.C.¹ At any rate, while this process of expediting the *honesta missio* was going on, recruiting must again have been very active, and eight years after 2 B.C., i.e. A.D. 5, we find the legions again dissatisfied. We learn from Dio Cassius (55, 23) that 'the soldiers were sorely displeased at the paltry character of the rewards given to them, and at the wars waged at this time, and none consented to bear arms longer than the regular period of service. It was therefore voted that twenty thousand sesterces should be given to members of the praetorian cohorts when they had served sixteen years, and twelve thousand sesterces to the other soldiers when they had served twenty years. This was followed in the next year by the establishment of the *aerarium militare* as recorded in the *Monument* III. 38: 'ex quo praemia darentur militibus qui uicena aut plura stipendia emeruissent.' We can hardly believe that this new scheme of regular discharge and pension was ever in full working order during the life of Augustus. The Pannonian rebellion began in the same year, and during its three years' course four new legions, XVII-XX, were created. Three of these, XVII-XIX, were destroyed with Varus, but two more, XXI and XXII, were enrolled, and the legionary budget must have been heavy for the remainder of the reign. That postponement of discharge and non-payment of retiring allowances were among the chief grievances which led to the mutinies in Pannonia and Germany after the death of Augustus we know from the account of Tacitus, and it must be admitted that up to the end of his reign Augustus, in spite of repeated attempts to solve the problem, had not succeeded in developing a system of *honesta missio* which was at once workable and satisfactory to the soldiers.

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¹ Not all, however, who had shared in these campaigns were discharged, for the veterans complaining of thirty years' service in the mutiny

of 15 A.D. must have been among those enlisted in 14 B.C.