

## VERGIL, THE CONFISCATIONS, AND CAESAR'S TENTH LEGION\*

The relevance of the 1st and 9th Vergilian Eclogues to land settlement in Italy after Philippi has been discussed by many scholars. Questions such as the identity of Tityrus, Menalcas, and the youthful *deus* of Eclogue 1, and the eventual fate of the paternal farm, are the very stuff of Vergilian scholarship.<sup>1</sup> It is possible to add an archaeological and epigraphic commentary on these events which may perhaps provide a more balanced framework for the continuing literary investigation of the poems.

That Cremona was among the 18 prosperous cities selected before Philippi to be a reward for the time-served soldiery among the Triumviral legions is a clear and safe deduction from the Eclogues themselves. The decision to establish colonies was taken at Bononia in October 43, and colony commissioners were appointed at the same time (Dio 47. 14. 4). It is unlikely that they began work in earnest until the necessary victory had been won. These commissioners, sometimes and perhaps always with the title *praefectus*, acted as substitutes for the formal *deductores*, the Triumvirs themselves.<sup>2</sup> The *praefectus* for Cremona is not directly attested.<sup>3</sup>

From the poems themselves and the scholiasts it might be thought that the arrival of the veterans to take possession was sudden and unannounced, adding to the shock felt by the owners (*Ecl.* 9. 3–4; *Serv. Proem.*). In fact, the process of establishing a colony was carefully defined, and took considerable time. Firstly the commissioner, with a staff of surveyors and assistants,<sup>4</sup> visited the town and set in motion the measurement of its *territorium*, the land on which the veterans would in due course be settled. Frequently the veterans expressed their dissatisfaction at the resulting time-lag (*App.* 3. 87; *Plut. Ant.* 73; *App.* 5. 13 ff.). Only when the survey was complete and a grid of *centuriae* established, did the commissioner return to Rome to assemble the intending colonists and to lead them forth with all the panoply of bygone days (cf. *Cic. Phil.* 2. 102; *App.* 2. 120, 5. 19). The land parcels were assigned by lot, and the details of ownership and location engraved on a series of large bronze maps, described collectively as the *forma coloniae*, which was set up in the forum of the colony for all to see.<sup>5</sup> Veterans did not normally take over existing farmsteads; land, farm-buildings, agricultural equipment and slaves (*App.* 4. 3; *Dio* 48. 6) must of necessity have been redistributed to suit the new allocation.

At Cremona it is clear that the traditional procedure was followed through. Recent fieldwork by Pierluigi Tozzi has shown how Cremona's existing grid, containing the normal square *centuriae* of 200 *iugera* (probably laid down at the foundation of the old *colonia Latina* of 218 B.C.), was remodelled to accommodate slightly larger,

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<sup>1</sup> G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 307 ff. L. P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Vergil* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 28. For a convenient bibliography of recent work, cf. A. G. McKay, *CW* 68 (1974), 13–19. See also C. Hardie, in *The Ancient Historian and his Materials*, ed. B. M. Levick (Farnborough, 1975), p. 109; M. Winterbottom, *G&R* 23 (1976), 55–9.

<sup>2</sup> *ILS* 887; also M. Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas* (Cambridge, 1947), p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> P. Alfenus Varus, suffect consul in 39, has sometimes been suggested for this post; see the discussion in T. R. S. Broughton, *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* II (New York, 1952), pp. 377 f.

<sup>4</sup> C. Nicolet, *Latomus* 29 (1970), 72.

<sup>5</sup> F. Castagnoli, *Mem. Acc. Linc.* ser. 7, 4 (1943), 83.

rectangular *centuriae* of 210 *iugera*; the *decumani* of the old grid were re-used, but the *cardines* were repositioned.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of the resurvey was, it seems, to accommodate land parcels of a specific size, and Tozzi has shown reason to conclude that the rectangles of 210 *iugera* were subdivided into 6 plots, each of 35 *iugera*, which may be seen as the basic allocation to veterans at Cremona.<sup>7</sup> This allotment size fits well with other evidence, literary and archaeological, which shows that veterans received a basic rate of between 25 and 50 *iugera* of Italian land at this time.<sup>8</sup>

Tozzi's researches have further revealed how this distinctive grid was extended eastwards into the *ager Mantuanus*, to within 1 km of the walls of that town.<sup>9</sup> Over 70% of Mantua's territory was covered by the grid. More surprisingly, it seems that Cremona's grid extended northwards, across the Oglio river, into the territory of Brixia – evidently Mantua was not alone in suffering from *nimia vicinitas* to the new colony (*Ecl.* 9. 28).<sup>10</sup>

Cremona must have been among the largest of the post-Philippi colonies; if the entire grid, estimated as containing about 1,600 *centuriae*, was made over to veterans in lots of 35 *iugera*, about 9,000 men could have been accommodated. A more reasonable estimate, allowing for estates handed back to senators (Dio 48. 8. 5), and to the former owners, for allocation to veterans at above the basic rate, and for unusable land, might be about 3,000–4,000 men at most.

Something can also be said about the origin and background of the colonists at Cremona. Some modern commentators on the Eclogues, impressed by Meliboeus' impassioned denunciation of the incoming veteran ('*impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit barbarus has segetes?*' *Ecl.* 1. 70–1), have identified the veterans as barbarous auxiliaries, foreign mercenaries in the Triumvirs' service.<sup>11</sup> In fact recipients of land allotments after Philippi were the time-served veterans of legions which had fought for Octavian, Antony and Lepidus. Most had been recruited in Italy or Cisalpina during Caesar's rapid expansion of the army in 49–48 B.C. In addition, veterans from Caesar's own Gallic legions, who had been discharged in 46–44, but who had volunteered to serve again after his murder, also received allotments at this time. These too were Italians from the peninsula, or Cisalpinians. There is no good evidence for the settlement in Italy of non-citizen auxiliaries.<sup>12</sup>

Appian reports that 28 legions required settlement after Philippi (5. 5). This total probably comprised 18 (or 19) legions of the group recruited in 49–48 B.C., together with 10 (or 9) evocate legions formed from Caesar's veterans. Often, it is clear, two legions were settled together, and analysis of the rather scanty evidence suggests that when legions were paired in this way, one of the evocate legions was frequently settled alongside one of the younger formations.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Storia Padana Antica* (Milano, 1972), pp. 18 ff. The size of the new *centuriae* was already known from the gromatic treatises, cf. Frontinus 30. 19; Siculus Flaccus 159. 14; Hyginus Gromaticus 170. 19.

<sup>7</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> *Lib. Col.* 214. 14; Frontinus 30. 20 (*centuria triumviralis* of 50 *iugera*); F. Castagnoli, *L'Universo* 28 (1948), 361; L. Bosio, *Att. Ist. Ven.* 124 (1965–6), 194; N. Alfieri, *Riv. Stor. Ant.* 6 (1976–77), 171; A. Piganiol, *Les documents cadastraux de la colonie romaine d'Orange* (Paris, 1962), p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 55 ff.; cf. Servius on *Ecl.* 9. 7–10.

<sup>10</sup> The grids of Cremona and of Brixia overlapped north of the Oglio; Tozzi supposes (*op. cit.*, p. 115) that the Brixian grid belongs to the Augustan age, in which case Cremona's expanded territory must have been cut back after Actium, thus restoring some balance between the economies of these two adjacent towns.

<sup>11</sup> E. A. Fredericksmeier, *Hermes* 94 (1966), 213 ff.; R. Coleman, *Vergil: Eclogues* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 31, 87.

<sup>12</sup> On the origins of colonists, P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 319 ff.

<sup>13</sup> e.g. Legions VII and XXVI at Luca (*ILS* 887); VI and XXX at Beneventum (*ILS* 2235; *CIL* ix 1622).

From Bagnolo 35 km north of Cremona has come the epitaph of *C. Lanius C. f. Ani.*, a veteran of the legion *X Veneria* (*CIL* v 4191 = *ILS* 2241). The voting tribe *Aniensis* reveals a link with Cremona, by birth or settlement. Almost certainly Bagnolo lay, under the Empire, within the *territorium* of Brixia, but the surrounding area could well have been transferred briefly to Cremona in the Triumviral period. The title *Veneria* attached to a legion is attested only here, but seems clear evidence of its Caesarian connection.<sup>14</sup> It would seem reasonable to identify the legion as Caesar's old Tenth, settled at Narbo in 45–44 B.C., and reconstituted by Plancus in the summer of 44. After the Bononia conference in October 43, it passed within the control of Antony.<sup>15</sup> Lanius may be envisaged as an *evocatus*, called out from Narbo by Lepidus who fought subsequently for the Triumvirs at Philippi, and received a fresh, probably enlarged, allotment at Cremona after the battle. The presence of the Tenth would serve to identify Cremona as one of the colonies established for Antony's soldiers.

The Tenth need not have been the sole recipients of land at Cremona. Its veterans must after Philippi have numbered a few hundred at most.<sup>16</sup> Almost certainly they shared the colony with one of the younger legions.

From Ricengo, northwest of Cremona, has come the damaged gravestone of *Naevius Ter. f.*, a veteran of the legion *XV Apollinaris*.<sup>17</sup> The formulae and the layout of the inscription suggest that it should be dated to the later first century B.C., and could commemorate a veteran settled after Philippi. The name-form *Ter(tii) f.* identifies Naevius as a first-generation citizen of native Cisalpine stock.<sup>18</sup> Though the title *Apollinaris* is thought to have been adopted by the legion only after Actium, it could have been brought into use retrospectively by this veteran in his later years. A legion XV was among the units raised by Caesar in 49–48; as such it would be eligible for land settlement after Philippi.<sup>19</sup> The tombstone of another possible colonist comes from Manerbio, north of the Oglio, but within the area covered by Cremona's centuriation. It records a Domitius who served in legion II, and the formula employed to designate his military service suggests that this stone too should date to the Late Republic.<sup>20</sup> A legion II was among Antony's forces at Mutina. Epitaphs of the Augustan age from the *ager Cremonensis* which record veterans of legion VIII and IX are unlikely to commemorate post-Philippi settlers.<sup>21</sup>

The colonists at Cremona may therefore have included members of Caesar's old Tenth legion, which probably shared the colony with another legion, perhaps the Second or more probably the Fifteenth. These men were not 'barbarians'; their names indicate that they were recruited in peninsular Italy or Cisalpine.<sup>22</sup> They were at least as 'Roman' as the *Transpadani* whom they displaced, if not more so.

The rustics in the Eclogues imagined that the importation of colonists would result in an immediate and catastrophic decline in the productiveness of the land so carefully

<sup>14</sup> S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 15 ff., 80 ff.

<sup>15</sup> On the movements of legions at this time see Brunt, op. cit., pp. 473 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Even in 45 B.C., at Munda, its ranks were noticeably thin; *Bell. Hisp.* 31. 4.

<sup>17</sup> G. Pontiroli, *Catalogo della sezione archeologica del museo Ala Ponzone di Cremona* (Milano, 1974), no. 252. The inscription reads... *ius Nae[vi] us Ter. f. leg. X[V] Apollin...*

<sup>18</sup> G. Chilver, *Cisalpine Gaul* (Oxford, 1941), p. 73.

<sup>19</sup> P. A. Brunt, op. cit., p. 475.

<sup>20</sup> *Boll. Stor. Crem.* 20 (1955–7), 175. The inscription reads *C. Domitius C. [f.] | legione II sib[i] | [et D]omitiae sor[ori] f.*

<sup>21</sup> Pontiroli, op. cit., no. 249: *Arruntius Maxumus [sig]n. leg IIX*; *ibid.*, no. 259: *T. Aponius P.f. Ani. signifer leg. IX Hispanien. vetera.*

<sup>22</sup> The name 'Lanius' is too rare for a precise origin to be pinpointed; 'Domitius' is an all too common name, but Cisalpine or Transalpine may be indicated. The Naevius at Cremona is almost certainly a Cisalpine (see above).

nurtured over many generations: 'his nos consevimus agros!' (*Ecl.* 1. 72). The picture of the veteran as a greedy and impatient spendthrift, interested in only a quick sale of his land and a prompt return to the delights of the capital, is a commonplace, now firmly discredited by Brunt.<sup>23</sup> There is a growing realization that the veterans established in the Italian countryside in the Late Republic had for the most part a serious interest in working the land which they had so earnestly sought as their reward for military service, and which offered them a unique opportunity for social advancement. The vast majority of surviving epitaphs of veterans derives from the countryside around known colonies, indicating that many did remain on their farms until death overtook them.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *JRS* 52 (1962), 69; *idem*, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 294 ff., and more recently P. D. Garnsey, *Proc. Camb. Phil. Soc.* 205 (1979), 1–25.

<sup>24</sup> See L. J. F. Keppie, *Colonisation and Veteran Settlement in Italy, 47–14 BC* (forthcoming).