

COLONIA IULIA EQUESTRIS AND LEGIO DECIMA EQUESTRIS

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In his article on the role played by Colonia Iulia Equestris, Konrad Kraft supports Theodor Mommsen's opinion that "Equestris" is to be considered a counterpart of the epithets "Decumanorum" in Narbo and "Sextanorum" in Arelate. Quite rightly, the epithet "Praetoria" in Augusta Praetoria is added for comparison. According to Mommsen, the epithet "Equestris" suggests, in the case of Colonia Iulia Equestris, that veterans from Caesar's cavalry had been taken there as colonists.¹ Kraft opposes on good grounds the view that these horsemen were of Germanic or Gallic origin. His conclusion is that the settlers were Roman veteran cavalrymen who had served either in cavalry divisions or in Caesar's legions.²

The following inscription from Patrae in Achaia³ may help in identifying the population of Colonia Iulia Equestris: C. VETVL-LVS. M. F / QVI . SIGNIFER / LEG . X . EQV.

Emil Ritterling has written the following observation on the combination LEG . X . EQV: "*In der Inschrift eines damals (16 v. C.) Deduzierten aus der Leg. X EQV ist die Überlieferung des Beinamens anscheinend verderbt; oder er war der einer bisher unbekannten, im östlichen Reichsteile garnisonierenden L. dieser Nummer*".⁴ Another inscription with a formula with which we are acquainted explains the abbreviation EQV.⁵ Here, the usual formula EQ. R. EQ. P. (Eques Romanus Equo Publico) has been extended to EQVITI. ROM. EQV. PVBLIC. In the case of Colonia

¹ Konrad Kraft, *Die Rolle der Colonia Iulia Equestris und die römische Auxiliar-Rekrutierung*, JRGZ 4 (1957) p. 96.

² Kraft, *ibid.*, pp. 96-99.

³ CIL III 508.

⁴ RE XII s.v. Legio, 1672; cf. 1671: Leg. X EQV (...), so überliefert in der Inschrift aus Patrae, CIL III 508. Beiname wohl verderbt (...); 1678: sicher falsch gelesen.

⁵ CIL V 5729.

Iulia Equestris, the epithet Equestris is usually abbreviated to EQ.¹ The abbreviation EQV may have occurred in an inscription once only.² On the analogy of the extension of EQV into equo or equestris, then, one could interpret LEG. X. EQV. as Legionis Decimae Equestris.

Patrae, where the inscription of the signifer Vetullus was found, officially became a Roman colony in 16 B.C.; on that occasion, veterans of Legio Duodecima Fulminata were allocated a colony. Yet, there is no reason to believe that Ritterling is right in claiming that veterans of Legio Decima Equestris were established in Patrae in the same year. The following example should show that it is possible to trace the inscription of Vetullus back to another date.

It was accepted as a matter of course that veterans of Legio Octava Augusta were established in Berytus at the deduction by Agrippa in 14 B.C., until the following inscription was found there: M. CORNELIVS / C. F. FAB. LEG. VIII / GALLICA. In the early years of Augustus' reign, the title "Gallica" was only used in the case of legions which had served in Gaul under Iulius Caesar. According to Ritterling, the deductio of the veteran Cornelius must have taken place before 27 B.C.; in his opinion, a deductio to the colony of Berytus in the period of the second triumvirate need not be impossible.³

Just as "Legio Decima" is extended to include "Equestris" in one inscription only, the epithet "Triumphalis" for Legio Nona also occurs in a single inscription. Alfred von Domaszewski assumes that, because of this single occurrence, the inscription should be traced back to an early period, viz. to that of the triumviri, and suggests that the title "Triumphalis" was granted to Caesar's former Legio Nona in connection with the entry of the triumviri into Rome in 43 B.C.⁴ The inscription of the veteran from Berytus

¹ Ernst Howald and Ernst Meyer, *Die römische Schweiz* (Zürich), 142, 144, 381, 385, 462; cf. 464.

² CIL XIII 9058; Schumacher, Howald-Meyer and Stähelin mistake the abbreviation EQ in an inscription from Colonia Iulia Equestris (CIL III 11895) for EQV. Cf. F. Stähelin, *Die Schweiz in römischer Zeit* (Basle, 1948³), p. 443 A2. For an illustration of this inscription, see Hauq-Sixt, *Die römischen Inschriften und Bildwerke Württembergs*², 34, 5a.

³ CIL III 14165⁶; RE XII s.v. Legio, 1643-4.

⁴ CIL V 397; RE XII s.v. Legio, 1664. B. H. Isaac has also determined 43 B.C. as the date of origin of the inscription of Legio Nona Triumphalis

shows that inscriptions found in one particular colony cannot automatically be related to one single date of deduction. As to Patrae, Strabo claims that a deduction of veterans had taken place there before 16 B.C., just after the battle of Actium, which we could not have inferred from the epigraphic material available.¹ On the analogy of the epithet "Triumphalis" of Caesar's old Legio Nona, occurring only once, the epithet "Equestris" for Legio Decima can also be placed in an early period, viz. between 50-40 B.C. The inscription may even date back to just after the battle of Pharsalus (48 B.C.). In another, recently discovered, inscription from Patrae, mention is made of Lucius Aemilius, son of Lucius, who served in Legio Decima Equestris as a centurio. It appears also that, after his military service, he occupied the post of *duovir* at Patrae, from which we may conclude that in his lifetime Patrae was already a military colony.² Caesar tells us, in connection with his campaign against the Helvetii in 58 B.C., that a certain Lucius Aemilius was decurio of the Gallic cavalry in the Roman army.³ It should be stressed that on this occasion the Gallic cavalry closely cooperated with Caesar's seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth legions.⁴ If this decurio Lucius Aemilius was the same man who, after he had become a centurio of Legio Decima Equestris, ended his career as a *duovir* of Patrae, a very tempting idea indeed, we may again conclude that the epithet "Equestris" for Legio Decima, on his inscription, stems from a comparatively early date.

From a chronological point of view, there may very well have been a link between Legio Decima Equestris and Colonia Iulia Equestris of which Kraft places the foundation by Caesar between 50-45 B.C.⁵ On the basis of Caesar's writings, moreover, Legio Decima Equestris can be identified as his own tenth legion. When, in 58 B.C., Caesar hurried to Genava because of the imminent migration of the Helvetii, he had only one legion, Legio Decima, at

but, on grounds of circumstantial evidence, he has related the epithet to L. Munatius Plancus' triumphal march; see pp. 29.

¹ Strabo 8, 7, 5 p. 387.

² Ph. Petsas, *New Latin Inscription from Patras*, Athens Annals of Archaeology, 4 (1971), pp. 112-115.

³ Caesar B.G. I, 23, 2.

⁴ Caesar B.G. I, 24, 1-2.

⁵ Kraft, *Die Rolle der Colonia Iulia Equestris*, p. 82.

his disposal in transalpine Gaul. His first security measure was to make them dismantle the bridge over the River Rhône.¹ It can be inferred from Caesar's account that the tenth legion was stationed in the territory of the Allobroges; this is not surprising as this tribe had been subdued by the Romans shortly before, in 61 B.C., and was still not considered as completely reliable in 58 B.C.² With the aid of his one legion and soldiers called up from Gallia Narbonensis in great haste, Caesar managed to build up an extensive line of defence within only one week, thus curbing the danger of a Helvetian migration over Roman territory just in time.³ In an even more awkward situation it became clear how much Caesar could rely on his Legio Decima, which had served him so well on a former occasion, near Genava. When Caesar's troops were about to back out of the imminent battle against the dreaded Germans under Ariovistus because they were scared, Caesar gave an admonitory speech to his officers which he concluded with the following words: "*Quodsi praeterea nemo sequatur, tamen se cum sola decima legione iturum, de qua non dubitaret, sibique eam praetoriam cohorten futuram*".⁴ The explanation of Legio Decima's special position is given by Caesar himself: "*Huic legioni Caesar et indulserat praecipue et propter virtutem confidebat maxime*".⁵

Just before the decisive rendezvous between Caesar and Ariovistus was to take place, the latter demanded that they would both only be accompanied by horsemen.⁶ As Caesar had at that moment only Gallic cavalrymen at his disposal, who were strong in number but whom he considered unreliable, Ariovistus' demand must have embarrassed him. He decided that his loyal infantrymen of Legio Decima were to accompany him on horseback; for this purpose, he took away all the horses used by the Gallic cavalry.⁷ In this way Caesar hoped to outdo Ariovistus who had most probably expected

¹ Cf. Stähelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-6; Caesar B.G. I, 7, 2; 8, 1.

² Caesar B.G. I, 6, 2-3; cf. VII, 64, 7.

³ Cf. Caesar B.G. I, 8, 1-2 for the construction of a line of defence. For archaeological evidence, see Stähelin, *op. cit.*, p. 76, note 1.

⁴ Caesar B.G. I, 40, 15; for a discussion of the position of the cohors praetoria, see a forthcoming article by R. A. van Royen (*Colonia Augusta Praetoria and Augustus' Cohortes Praetoriae*).

⁵ Caesar B.G. I, 40, 15.

⁶ Caesar B.G. I, 42, 4.

⁷ Caesar B.G. I, 42, 5.

that if his formidable Germanic horsemen would attack Caesar's accompanying riders during the rendezvous, the Gallic escort would not be able to hold their own. Yet, Caesar was risking a great deal by using the infantrymen from Legio Decima as horsemen. When the Germanic cavalrymen did open the attack during the rendezvous, Caesar went to his newly-promoted horsemen and forbade them to fight back, in order to avoid anyone accusing him of betrayal. Caesar's emphatic assurance that "*sine ullo periculo legionis delectae cum equitatu proelium fore*" gives a fair impression of how awkward the situation must have been.¹ An amusing anecdote in the *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* establishes almost beyond doubt that Legio Decima was called Equestris because of its role in Caesar's daring action. When the soldiers of Legio Decima mounted their horses, one of them could not resist the remark: "*Plus, quam pollicitus esset, Caesarem ei facere: pollicitum se in cohortis praetoriae loco decimam legionem habiturum, ad equum rescribere*".² The joke is, of course, that by "*ad equum rescribere*" are meant both the promotion to knighthood and to cavalryman. Caesar knew how to appreciate a good joke (*non inridicule!*) and reacted to the soldier's witticism by giving the entire tenth legion a suitable honorary name: from then on it was known as Legio Decima Equestris. Legio Decima Equestris remained the *corps d'élite* in Caesar's following campaigns in Gaul (58-50 B.C.) and was decisive for the outcome of the important battles of Pharsalus (48 B.C.) and Munda (45 B.C.).³

More than one year after Caesar's assassination, Legio Decima is referred to as Legio Decima Veterana in a letter written by Munatius Plancus and dated the end of April, 43 B.C.⁴ At the time, Plancus was governor over Gallia Comata, conquered by Caesar, and had,

¹ Caesar B.G. I, 46, 1-3.

² Caesar B.G. I, 42, 6.

³ Caesar B.G. II, 21, 1-3; 23, 1-2; 26, 4-5; IV, 25, 3-5; VII, 47, 1; 51, 1; Caesar B.C. III, 89, 1; 91, 1-4; 99, 1-3; Appianus B.C. III, 11, 76; B.H. 31, 4. For the background to the mutiny of Legio Decima in 47 B.C., see B. H. Isaac, p. 25.

⁴ For Plancus' activities in Gallia Comata, cf. Gerold Walser, *Der Briefwechsel des L. Munatius Plancus mit Cicero* (Basle, 1957), pp. 19-22; for the phrase "decima legio veterana", see p. 108, Brief XII, 2; for the epithet "veterana" for Caesar's old legions, cf. for instance CIL XI, 6351 and RE XII, s.v. Legio, 1664.

on the request of the Senate, raised an army there intended to fight Antony. A passage in a letter written by Plancus shows that this was by no means an easy task: from it, we may conclude that the prevailing mood among the veterans was definitely in favour of Antony, Caesar's former general: "*Confirmandus erat exercitus nobis, magnis saepe praemiis sollicitatus, ut ab re publica potius moderata quam ab uno infinita speraret*".¹ Because of Munatius Plancus' generosity, he finally succeeded in winning five legions over to his side.² In a later letter, Plancus expresses uncertainty about the reliability of Legio Decima Veterana which, in his opinion, might well decide to support Antony; he was proved right when Legio Decima defected to Lepidus who sided with Antony.³ A letter from Plancus to Cicero, dated 13 May, 43 B.C., shows that he had only four legions left at his disposal and therefore proves that Legio Decima Veterana joined Lepidus' forces before that date. This letter also contains the apparently irrelevant remark that out of Lepidus' small number of horsemen the ten best ones had defected to Plancus a few days before, but this can hardly have reassured Cicero.⁴ The veterans in Plancus' remaining legions could not be considered as completely reliable either; this is clear from his last letter to Cicero in which he expresses relief on hearing that the Senate had granted land to his veterans which might keep them from siding with Antony.⁵ Yet this measure was of no avail as Plancus himself decided to join Lepidus and Antony with all his forces in September, 43 B.C.⁶ In the same letter, Plancus wrote

¹ Walser, *op. cit.*, p. 82, Brief VII, 3.

² Walser, *op. cit.*, p. 84, Brief VII, 6.

³ Walser, *op. cit.*, p. 108, Brief XII, 2. Appianus (B.C. III, 12, 83) assumes that there is an extremely close relationship between Legio Decima Veterana and Antony: τό τε καλούμενον δέκατον τέλος ἔξεναγημένον ὑπὸ Ἀντωνίου πάλαι τὰ ἔνδον αὐτῷ παρεσκεύαζεν.

Cf. Caesar B.G. VIII, 2, 1: "*Caesar M. Antonium quaestorem suis praefecit hibernis*". In the winter of 52-51 B.C., Caesar's legions had their winter quarters spread all over Gaul. Caesar himself, accompanied by a cavalry escort, left for military action for the 11th and 13th legions and next called up the 14th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th legions. As the tenth legion is not mentioned, we may conclude that Antony was staying behind with the tenth in Caesar's headquarters (cf. B.G. VIII, 4, 3; VIII, 8, 2).

⁴ Walser, *op. cit.*, p. 126, Brief XVI, 2-3.

⁵ Walser, *op. cit.*, p. 170, Brief XXV, 2.

⁶ Walser, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

that he had the command over three veteran legions and one legion made up of recruits. Originally, then, Munatius Plancus' army had, including Legio Decima Veterana, counted four veteran legions who were paid a large amount of money to leave their colonies and return to active service.¹ Obviously, this cannot have been a very difficult decision for veterans who had been deduced only a short while before because they could hardly have had enough time to settle down in their colonies.²

Together with Legio Septima, Octava, and Nona, Legio Decima Equestris was the oldest among Caesar's veteran legions and they were therefore the first to be eligible for deductio.³ Of course, Legio Decima Equestris was deduced to a colony after Caesar's triumph in Rome in connection with his victories in Spain; for it had contributed a great deal to these victories. The triumphal march of October, 45 B.C. was, according to Dio, followed by a supplicatio of 50 days, after which the veterans could have left for the colony allocated to them by the end of November, 45 B.C. at the earliest.⁴ As we have established before, Legio Decima Equestris was one of

¹ Cf. Walser, *op. cit.*, p. 108, Brief XII, 2: "decima legio veterana, quae nostra opera revocata cum reliquis est;" for "evocare" as a terminus technicus, cf. Dio XLV, 12, 3: ἐξ τούτων δὴ τῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ τὸ τῶν ἡσυχάτων σύστημα, οὓς ἀνακλήτους ἦν τις ἐλληνίσας, ὅτι πεπαυμένοι τῆς στρατείας ἐπ' αὐτὴν αὖθις ἀνεκλήθησαν, δνομάστειν, ἐνομίσθη. "Revocare" is also a terminus technicus (cf. Tacitus Hist. II, 82, 1: "*revocare veteranos*") which is apparently used to mean the renewed call-up of retired veterans, as is shown by a passage from Livy (XXXIII, 3, 4): "*ita et tirones ab sedecim annis milites scribebat, et emeritis quidem stipendiis, quibus modo quicquam reliqui roboris erat, ad signa revocabantur*"; besides, a communication from Velleius Paterculus (II, 111), referring to an emergency situation for the Romans, supports this interpretation of the term "revocare": "*Habiti itaque dilectus, revocati undique et omnes veterani, viri feminaeque ex censu libertinum coactae dare militem*". Cf. also CIL VI, 2725, line 6-7: "*MISSVS. HONESTA . MISSION/ REVOC . AB . IMP.*".

² In Campania, other veteran legions of Caesar's were faced with the same situation. See B. H. Isaac, Appendix II, p. 39.

³ For the deduction of Legio Septima and Octava, cf. B. H. Isaac, Appendix II, p. 10; for the deduction of Legio Nona, cf. Isaac, p. 38; cf. Caesar B.G. I, 7, 2; 10, 3 and 24, 2 with VIII, 8, 2.

⁴ Dio XLIII, 42, 2; Livy periocha CXVI: "*Caesar ex Hispania quintum triumphum egit*"; cf. Velleius Paterculus II, LVI, 2; Suetonius, Iulius 37-9. The considerable numerical reduction of Legio Decima Equestris over the years appears from a remark about the legion's strength in the battle of Munda: "*erant pauci*" (B.H. 31, 4).

the four veteran legions commanded by Munatius Plancus, governor of Gallia Comata, in 43 B.C.

Between 50-40 B.C., three colonies were founded in Gallia Comata, of which Lugdunum and Raurica were settled by Munatius Plancus himself in 43 B.C.¹ The name of the third colony, Colonia Iulia Equestris, suggests that it was founded while Caesar was still alive; the arguments put forward to prove this by, for instance, Konrad Kraft and Friedrich Vittinghoff are very plausible.² In this context, one could easily assume that Colonia Iulia Equestris had been allocated to Legio Decima Equestris by Caesar. The foundation date of Colonia Iulia Equestris, therefore, can be defined more precisely and placed in the period between the end of November, 45 B.C. and 15 March 44 B.C., the day of Caesar's death.

It was apparently Caesar's intention to give his loyal decumani a colony in the region where they had begun their glorious career during the migration of the Helvetii of 58 B.C. Of course, this Gallic veteran legion could ensure efficient guarding of the southern route to Gaul between Iura and Rhône, similar to the legion that was sent to Colonia Raurica to guard the route north of the Iura.³ This did not last for very long. Ritterling has already pointed out that Legio Decima Veterana, after it had joined Antony in 43 B.C., went with him to Italy⁴ and later took part in the battle of Philippi of 42 B.C.⁵

We learn from Suetonius that, at an undetermined moment but definitely after the battle of Philippi, Legio Decima, which in Octavian's opinion had been too undisciplined, was dismissed ignominiously. Other veteran legions which in his opinion were too bold in demanding dismissal from military service were punished

¹ Walser, *op. cit.*, p. 19; p. 29.

² Kraft, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-2; F. Vittinghoff, *Römische Kolonisation und Bürgerrechtspolitik unter Caesar und Augustus* (Wiesbaden, 1952), p. 68.

³ Cf. Vittinghoff, *op. cit.*, p. 25, note 4 for establishing an entire legion in a colony.

⁴ The presence of a veteran from Legio Decima Veterana in Italy could perhaps be proved on the basis of a very badly preserved inscription (CIL V 4191) in which LEG. X. VENER may have to be read as LEG. X. VE^{TER} (for the letter "V", cf. Auctarium CIL p. LXVI; for the ligature "N", see Auctarium CIL, p. 318, 906: MARN).

⁵ Emil Ritterling, *De Legione Romanorum X Gemina* (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 4-5.

in the same way by Octavian which involved financial disadvantages for the veterans.¹ Similar communications from Dio about the final dismissal of disgruntled veterans by Octavian show explicitly that the oldest among them were sent to Gaul for purposes of colonization.² An indication from the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* which shows that Octavian deduced veterans only to Gallia Narbonensis and nowhere else in Gaul makes it plausible that Legio Decima Equestris did not return to Colonia Iulia Equestris after its dismissal but that Colonia Narbo Martius Paterna Decumanorum was given to Caesar's decumani as their new residence by Octavian in 36 or 35 B.C.³ Another indication that Octavian deduced the tenth legion is the occurrence of the epithet "Paterna" which he used for colonies founded by Caesar and for veteran legions of Caesar's under his own command.⁴

The logical consequence of the deduction of Caesar's old decumani to Narbo would normally have been that Colonia Iulia Equestris ceased to exist after the departure of Legio Decima Veterana in 43 B.C., as must have happened in the case of its counterpart in the territory of the Raurici.⁵ The reason for the survival of Colonia

¹ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 24.

² Dio XLIX, 13-34; 34.

³ *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 28: "Coloniae in (...) Gallia Narbonensi (...) militum deduxi"; cf. F. Vittinghoff, *op. cit.*, p. 66 with note 4 for a list of other veteran colonies in Gallia Narbonensis; in view of the fact that their names derive from legionary numbers, they must be traced back to the time of the second triumvirate (cf. the colonies involved in RE IV 528-9, s.v. *Coloniae*). Cf. Strabo 5, 1, 6 for the large-scale recolonization of veterans.

Helga Botermann assumes that Lepidus had summoned the tenth legion from Narbo. Yet, she has overlooked information from the correspondence between Cicero and Plancus which shows that this legion originally formed part of Plancus' forces in Gallia Comata (cf. pp. 5-8 above). The starting-point of her argumentation is that the veterans of legio sexta and decima had already been deduced to Arelate and Narbo by Caesar himself. See Helga Botermann, *Die Soldaten und die römische Politik in der Zeit von Caesar's Tod bis zur Begründung des Zweiten Triumvirats* (Munich, 1968), p. 199.

⁴ Octavian gave the name "paterna" to the colonies of Arelate and Narbo because they had already been founded by Caesar in 46 B.C.; cf. Suetonius Tib. 4, 1; for Octavian's legions bearing the epithet "paterna" cf. CIL XI 1058: *LEG. XII/PATERNAE*; cf. also Cicero, Phil. IV, 1, 3: *paternis militibus*, referring to Octavian's legions in 43 B.C.

⁵ As a result, the Swiss archaeologists working on the excellent excavation of Colonia Raurica have so far not been able to find any traces of the earliest period of this colony; cf. Ernst Meyer, *Neuere Forschungsergebnisse*

Iulia Equestris must have been the fact that, unlike Colonia Raurica, it lay within the Roman sphere of influence, i.e. on the edge of the vast territory of the colony of Vienna. This territory also included nearby Genava.¹ After Caesar's decumani had left their Colonia Iulia Equestris, it was doomed to become a small provincial town whose administrative and clerical posts were later on, at times, still occupied by citizens of Vienna, the administrative centre.²

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¹ Cf. Stähelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-2; for the close relationships between the citizens of Vienna, Genava, Wallis, and Equestris, cf. Howald/Meyer, *op. cit.*, 95, 145, 147.

² Howald/Meyer, *op. cit.*, 93, 139. A coin found in Vienna bearing the legionary stamp of Legio Decima Equestris serves as an indication of contacts between Vienna and Equestris during the residence of Caesar's veterans; for an incorrect interpretation of the inscription, see Michael Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas: A Historical Survey of Aes Coinage in the Roman Empire*, 49 B.C.-14 A.D. (Cambridge, 1946), p. 117.