

Non-slave labour in Roman Spain

L. A. CURCHIN

Non-slave labour in antiquity has been the focus of much recent attention; indeed, the Seventh International Economic History Conference at Edinburgh in 1978 devoted its Ancient Near East and Ancient History sections to this theme. The preference of the term «non-slave» to «free» allows inclusion of such semi-free groups as the Mesopotamian *gurush* and Greek helots. In Roman contexts, however, the two terms may be used interchangeably, despite misguided assertions (both ancient and modern) that Rome's hired labourers were little better than slaves¹.

Previous studies have examined non-slave labour in Rome, Italy, and the provinces of Africa, Asia and Gaul². Conspicuous by their absence from this list are the Spanish provinces, whose claim to primacy in economic discussions is assured by Spain's status as the richest region of the Empire³. A study of Spanish non-slave labour is therefore not only overdue but also sorely needed, both to fill this obvious gap and to provide the basis for comparison with other provincial areas.

We may distinguish four types of non-slave labour: self-employment, family employment, libertine *operae*, and hired labour. These working relationships could exist in isolation or in combination: self-employed craftsmen might utilize members of their own families as well as hired workers (not to mention slaves) in the operation of their businesses.

The importance of family employment is too easily overlooked. Apart

¹ P. D. Garnsey (ed.), *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World* (1980), 34, 52; G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (1981), 112.

² P. A. Brunt, *JRS* 70 (1980), 81-100 (Rome). Garnsey, *o.c.* contains articles on Rome by S. M. Treggiari (pp. 48-64), on Italy by Garnsey (34-47) and J. E. Skydsgaard (65-72), and on three provinces by C. R. Whittaker (73-99).

³ Pliny *NH* 37, 203; other sources discussed by L. A. Curchin, *Historia* 32 (1983), 227-228.

from its social and biological functions, the family often acts as an economic production unit in preindustrial societies, supplying all or most of the labour necessary to run a farm, store, or workshop. Indeed, in mediaeval Spain the family control of small business over an extended period resulted in career immobility and technological stagnation, and the system is still visible in parts of rural Spain⁴. Unfortunately for the historian, family labour was such a commonplace in antiquity that the sources seldom thought it worthy of record. Thus much of our evidence for non-slave labour involves extra-familial employees, whose clamouring for wages made them a necessary evil in a sometimes shaky economy, and an object of derision among senators and philosophers⁵.

Non-slave labour was engaged in all major sectors of the working world, such as agriculture, industry, sales, services, administration, and rough labour. Of these, industry and sales often coincide: a potter or shoemaker, for instance, may sell his product in his own shop, and manufacturers may easily be confused with merchants. The seventeenth-century historian Diego de Colmenares records an analogous situation in the Segovia of his day⁶:

...the clothmakers, whom the common people mistakenly call merchants, when they are in fact the heads of huge families, who give a living to many people (sometimes two or three hundred) either in their own households or outside, and so by the work of many hands manufacture a great variety of fine woollen cloths.

Casual Labour

While some hired labour may have been on permanent salary (though there is no evidence for the practice)⁷, there were many situations in which short-term labour was required, on either a daily or seasonal basis. Harvests and construction projects are evident examples, and directly relevant to the high agricultural output and extensive public works attested in Roman Spain. Fishing may have been another seasonal occupation: the large tuna of Baetica (praised by Strabo 3, 2, 7) can best be caught in the summer, and it was the annual practice in Golden Age Spain for the tuna monopolist to muster a veritable army of temporary fishermen in this season⁸. The fish-

⁴ S. H. Brandes, *Migration, Kinship and Community: Tradition and Transition in a Spanish Village* (1975), 8, 79; T. F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (1979), 220.

⁵ Treggiari in Garnsey, *o.c.* 48-50.

⁶ Diego de Colmenares, *Historia de la insigne ciudad de Segovia*, 2nd edn. (1640), 547, quoted by F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1972), 432.

⁷ De Ste Croix, *o.c.* 192-193.

⁸ Braudel, *o.c.* 258. Cf. *Digest* 33, 7, 27 (Scaevola) on servile fishermen who follow their masters from place to place.

sauce (*garum*) industry, dependent on this seasonal catch, may also have employed casual labour in peak periods.

Potential labourers who lacked the experience or good fortune to obtain a seasonal contract would have to seek employment by the day. This was achieved or attempted by congregating in the marketplace (which acted conveniently as a labour exchange or casual workers' pool) and waiting to be engaged by an employer or his agent, at a mutually agreeable salary⁹. The practice was still flourishing in sixteenth-century Valladolid, where farm workers would assemble in the plaza shortly before sunrise and be hired for a wage which varied with the season, the type of work, and the length of the day¹⁰. In present-day Andalucía a similar hiring procedure is followed, with the sensible modification that the time-consuming haggling between field manager and *jornaleros* takes place the preceding evening¹¹.

There seems to have been no fixed wage, and in hard times (e.g. crop failures) starving men would have sold their services for a pittance. Duncan-Jones calculates that an urban labourer may have earned three sesterces a day, a rural worker no more than half that¹². This last figure is based on Cato (*De agr.* 22, 3), who states that six ox-drivers with their teams could be hired for six days for seventy-two sesterces, i.e. two sesterces would hire both the driver and his oxen (and wagon) for one day. This, however, was in the early second century B.C., and Duncan-Jones fails to cite St. Matthew's parable (20, 1-16) of the vineyard workers hired at one denarius, i.e. four sesterces, a day. (The tale is fictitious, but in order to have appeared plausible it must have reflected a likely wage.) In another passage (St. Luke 10, 1-7), Jesus compares his disciples to harvest workers and urges them to accept food and drink in the houses where they preach, «because the labourer is worthy of his hire». This suggestion that farm workers were sometimes paid in kind is later confirmed by Diocletian's price edict, which limits rural day-wages to twenty-five denarii (one hundred sesterces) plus food. Such a system may have continued in Spain (with or without official sanction) for a long time; at any rate, the Segovia ordinances of 1514 found it necessary to forbid the payment of *jornaleros* in kind. (These regulations were designed to benefit the landowners, whose workers were now obliged to accept currency during a period of rampant inflation¹³.)

Of course, a worker who felt he was being cheated could take his revenge by stealing from the employer (a situation discussed by the jurist Paul), and

⁹ Cf. St. Matthew 20, 1-7.

¹⁰ B. Bennisar, *Valladolid au siècle d'or* (1967), 234. Similar situation in Africa: B. D. Shaw, *Ant. Afr.* 17 (1981), 57. On pre-dawn risings by the unemployed, cf. Juvenal's *sportula* hopefuls (3, 127).

¹¹ D. D. Gilmore, *The People of the Plain* (1980), 92-93.

¹² R. Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies* (1974), 54.

¹³ A. García Sanz, *Desarrollo y crisis del Antiguo Régimen en Castilla la Vieja* (1977), 284-286.

the ore-thefts anticipated in the mining regulations of Vipasca in Lusitania perhaps reflect distrust of the hired help¹⁴.

Agriculture

The vast majority of the Spanish population, in ancient as in later times, was involved in agriculture¹⁵. Non-slave labour here consisted of two basic types, peasants and hired hands, although the categories are not mutually exclusive, since peasants could also hire themselves out as casual labourers¹⁶. I am not concerned here with the distinction between the independent «peasant proprietor» who owns his land outright, and the «peasant tenant» (*colonus*) who pays rent. The legalities of ownership did not materially affect the organization of the labour force, and if the renter had less surplus capital for purchasing slaves or hiring day-workers, this was a difference of quantity, not quality¹⁷.

Peasants may be defined as «rural cultivators with control over land deriving from ownership or tenancy»¹⁸. Peasant farming is, by nature, labour intensive and requires family participation (as Varro recognized: *RR* 1, 17, 2), although women may have played a lesser agricultural role in parts of the ancient world (e.g. Greece) than in modern societies¹⁹. Nonetheless, Strabo remarks the fortitude of Spanish women, who till the fields and even give birth in them while their husbands stay home on paternity leave²⁰. Our evidence for mediaeval Spain similarly shows a large number of women working the fields²¹, and there were other chores for women as well, such as the making of bread²². We may reasonably see the peasant family in Roman Spain as an extended form of domestic economy within a rural environment; or, in sociological jargon, as a «production team composed of individuals of given age and sex, corresponding to the family demographically»²³.

But even on a small plot of land and with the integrated labour of all family members, it would sometimes be necessary to engage additional workers, at harvest for instance. While such casual manpower might be

¹⁴ *Digest* 47, 1, 91; *FIRA* I, n.º 104, lines 27-29. Lusitanians were renowned for banditry: see e.g. Diod. Sic. 5, 34, 6; *Bell. Hisp.* 40.

¹⁵ Garnsey, *o.c.* 34-35; Bannassar, *o.c.* 220; J. N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms 1250-1516*, I, (1976), 33.

¹⁶ Cf. J. K. Evans, *AJAH* 5 (1980), 136-137.

¹⁷ See Garnsey, *o.c.* 36-38 on the ambiguity and fluidity of distinctions between owners and tenants.

¹⁸ Gilmore, *o.c.* 10.

¹⁹ B. Galeski, *Basic Concepts of Rural Sociology* (1972), 10, 113; A. D. Fitton Brown, *LCM* 9.5 (1984), 71-74; cf. Columella, book 12 Preface.

²⁰ Strabo 3, 4, 17. Cf. Gilmore, *o.c.* 82, where modern farm-wives work until the seventh month of pregnancy.

²¹ Hillgarth, *o.c.* 83; Bannassar, *o.c.* 231.

²² Pliny *NH* 18, 107.

²³ B. Galeski in T. Shanin (ed.), *Peasants and Peasant Societies* (1971), 120.

obtained through either a personal network (relatives and friends) or community participation, the standard expedient mentioned by the ancient agronomists —whose primary audience, however, was the more affluent landowner— was hired labour. The prevalence and mechanics of hired labour in the Roman countryside have been well treated by Garnsey²⁴. While specific evidence for Roman Spain is lacking, it is instructive to note that in modern Spain, fully one-third of all agricultural workers are day-labourers, and in the south the figure is closer to sixty per cent.; Portugal also has much casual rural labour, hired either by day, week or season²⁵.

The Spanish writer Columella (*RR* 2, 12) provides detailed calculations of the man-days required to plant and reap various crops, but gives no advice on the wages to be paid for each type of job if extra hands are required. The rural day-wage mentioned in Diocletian's edict is, of course, a ceiling, and lesser salaries were possible. An idea of *relative* pay values for different agricultural jobs may be gained from a consideration of salary scales in sixteenth-century Murcia. Weeders and barley reapers were the worst paid, at 51 *maravedis* per day; wheat reapers, diggers, leaf gatherers, pruners and grape treaders received 68, while vine-diggers and irrigators drew 85 *maravedis*²⁶. This wage differentiation seems based on the physical difficulty of the labour rather than on the amount of skill required, and one may wonder whether the primitive nature of such a system may have ancient origins.

Industry

Industrial non-slave labour includes self-employed artisans, wage-labourers working in manufactories, and freedmen performing *operae* for their patrons. The freedmen who work in their patrons' smelteries in second-century A.D. Vipasca²⁷ may belong to either the second or third category, or possibly to both (i.e. they may have been paid only for their non-*operae* days).

Literary references to non-slave industrial employees are rare²⁸. A notable exception is provided in Livy's account (26, 47, 1-2) of the capture of Carthago Nova by Scipio Africanus in 210 B.C. Of 10,000 free males in that city, 2,000 were *opifices*; these, however, he turned into public slaves, promising the restoration of their freedom if they worked diligently in war-equipment production. This early testimony for the proportion of urban free labour employed in industry is unfortunately unparalleled in later times.

The epigraphic record, on the other hand, is rather more loquacious in

²⁴ Garnsey, *o.c.* 41-42.

²⁵ Gilmore, *o.c.* 10; J. Cutileiro, *A Portuguese Rural Society* (1971), 59.

²⁶ F. Chacón Jiménez, *Murcia en la centuria del quinientos* (1979), 311.

²⁷ *ILS* 6891, lines 55-56.

²⁸ On this problem see M. L. Sánchez León, *Economía de la Hispania meridional durante la dinastía de los Antoninos* (1978), 219-220.

providing us with the names and trades of free artisans. One can seldom distinguish free-born from libertine names, but the *caelator anaglyptarius* C. Valerius Diophanes is possibly of servile origin by virtue of his *cognomen* (not that this is, by any means, an infallible criterion)²⁹, while explicit *libertini* include the *sutor* L. Vergilius L. I. Hilarus, the *pistor*... M. I. Nicephorus, and the *faber lapidarius* M. Messius M. I. Samalo³⁰. A rare example of filiation (suggesting free-born status) is afforded by Caesia L. (?) f. Celsa, *lanifici praeclara*; but one doubts that she is a professional³¹. The general impression derived from a perusal of the inscriptions is that of a fairly even balance between slave and non-slave artisans. Precise calculations, however, are unfeasible because of the presence of *peregrini*, who are often designated by *cognomen* alone and are thus difficult to distinguish from slaves. (Genuine artisanal slaves are sometimes conveniently designated *servus* or *verna*³².) In any event it is impossible to agree with Schtajerman, who would have us believe that neither slaves, freedmen nor the free poor played much part in Spanish *Handwerk*³³.

Considerable evidence for industrial non-slave labour comes from the ceramic industry in the form of pottery stamps, which record the *duo* or *tria nomina* (often abbreviated) of free producers of tiles, amphorae, fine wares, etc.; Spanish-made *terra sigillata* in particular bears a high proportion of free names³⁴. In some cases these names could represent the owners of large manufactories, but in others they are surely the potters themselves, whether self-employed or hired. At Conimbriga we find graffiti etched on tiles, giving the daily quotas of the workers, and occasionally their names. Normal production per person seems to have been a hundred tiles a day (variants: 100, 101, 102), but there is one graffito recording six, another of 223, and a surprising 1.000 (a team quota?)³⁵. Unfortunately, most of these tallies are anonymous or record only a *cognomen*, which could be a servile worker, but there is one Julia (perhaps an Imperial *liberta*?). A study of Roman brick stamps has noted that the names are usually of non-slaves³⁶, but the stamps (as against graffiti) from Conimbriga mostly record only *cognomina* (an *Allia* is exceptional); nonetheless these may be abbreviated names only³⁷. The total number of workers employed in brick and tile works is unknown. However, it

²⁹ *CIL* II, 2243=*ILER* 5699; see A. García y Bellido, *AEA* 28 (1955), 17.

³⁰ *CIL* II, 5934=*ILER* 5750; *HAep* 97=*ILER* 6477; *AE* 1977, 458; all, interestingly enough, from Carthago Nova (see above on pre-Roman *opifices*).

³¹ *CIL* II, 1699=*ILER* 5782; cf. Treggiari, *AJAH* 1 (1976), 83 on domestic wool-working.

³² E.g. *ILER* 826 (*marmorarius*), 5719 (*inaurator*), 5723 (*marmorarius signarius*).

³³ E. M. Schtajerman, *Die Krise der Sklavenhalterordnung im Westen des römischen Reiches* (1974), 143, 146.

³⁴ Tiles: *CIL* II, 4967, 6252. Amphorae: M. H. Callender, *Roman Amphorae* (1965); M. Beltrán Lloris, *Las ánforas romanas en España* (1970). Fine wares: F. Mayet, *Bol. del M.A.N.* 1/2 (1983), 148. Cf. A. Stylow, *Gerión* 1 (1983), 280 for a *dolium* (?) with freedman's stamp.

³⁵ R. Etienne *et al.*, *Fouilles de Conimbriga*, II (1976), n.º 359-370. But the inscription *ILER* 5876, purporting to record production of 902 tiles by one woman, suggests that these counts could cover a longer time-span.

³⁶ T. Helen, *Organization of Roman Brick Production* (1975), 23.

³⁷ *Fouilles de Conimbriga*, II, pp. 134-141.

is interesting to observe that the Caesarian charter of Urso limits tile manufactories to production of 300 tiles per day, which by Conimbrigan norms would mean a maximum of three employees³⁸.

Trade and Commerce

Merchandising has a long history in Spain: the Phoenicians and Greeks operated trading stations in the Peninsula long before the arrival of the Romans. Italian businessmen often employed freedmen (and slaves) as agents in the provinces³⁹, and the epitaphs of such agents seem to be included among the Republican inscriptions from Tarraco⁴⁰. Within Spain (as throughout the ancient world) libertine agents or independent *negotiatores* will also have been employed by prominent landowners, even for sales in local markets⁴¹. Freedmen could also operate independently: in the second century A.D. a libertine and obviously wealthy *negotiator* from Tarraconensis, L. Numisius L. I. Agathemerus, was buried at Ostia for the impressive sum of 100,000 sesterces⁴², and the demonstrable prominence of libertine *mercatores* in the Gallic economy invites comparison⁴³. Rich freedmen are, of course, a *topos* in Roman history and literature⁴⁴.

Much of Spain's external commerce was in support of the Imperial *annona*, providing oil, grain and other necessities to Italy, and it is in this context that we may note the importance not only of the *navicularii Hispaniarum* (shipmasters under government contract, who found their way into the law-books), but also of the *collegia* of boatmen (*scapharii*, *lyntrarii* and *caudicarii*) who kept supplies moving on the rivers⁴⁵. The boatmen themselves appear to have been involved in the trading, and in the early sixth century we hear of *navicularii* who sold, on the black market, Spanish wheat consigned for delivery to Italy⁴⁶.

While overseas trading was undoubtedly profitable, most of the personnel employed in sales will have enjoyed a more modest, local purview. Numerous types of shopkeepers are attested in Spanish inscriptions, retailing everything

³⁸ ILS 6087, chapter 76.

³⁹ M. W. Frederiksen, *JRS* 65 (1975), 167; Treggiari in Garnsey, *o.c.* 53; Sánchez León, *o.c.* 263-264; J. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (1981), 30, 39-42, 154-157; L. A. Curchin, *Florilegium* 4 (1982), 38.

⁴⁰ Alföldy, *RIT*, n.º 6.

⁴¹ H. W. Pleket, *Akten des VI Internationalen Kongresses für Griechische und Lateinische Epigraphik* (1973), 253.

⁴² *CIL* XIV, 397.

⁴³ M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (1973), 59-60.

⁴⁴ E.g. Cic. *Pro Rosc. Amer.* 46, 133; Pliny *NH* 33, 134-135; Tac. *Hist.* 2, 94; Petronius *Cena Trim.*; Juv. *Sat.* 1, 103-106; 14, 329-330.

⁴⁵ *Cod. Theod.* 13, 5, 4 and 8; L. West, *Imperial Roman Spain: The Objects of Trade* (1929), 7-9; J. M. Santero Santurino, *Asociaciones populares en Hispania romana* (1978), 134-141.

⁴⁶ *Scaphari qui Romulae negotiantur: CIL* II, 1168-1169; Cassiod. *Var.* 5, 35.

from pearls to pepper⁴⁷. The flourishing of such activity even before the Roman occupation has been proved by the discovery of shops in excavated Iberian villages⁴⁸. Extra sales clerks may have been hired, but an easier and more economical solution was to employ members of one's own family. Child labour in provincial *tabernae* is said to have been widespread⁴⁹, and the employment of family members in shops in Islamic and mediaeval Spain is a practice undoubtedly inherited from Roman times⁵⁰. In addition to retaining capital within the household, the family acted as an efficient team; in eighteenth-century London it was observed that «a shopkeeper and a shopkeeper's wife seem to be one bone and one flesh»⁵¹.

Sales were further boosted through the employment of hawkers (*circitores*), who offered goods to the public either on the street or on a door-to-door basis. This profession is still visible in the Peninsula today, being perhaps most colourfully exemplified by the *varinhas* (fishwives) of Lisbon who hawk anchovies and sardines from door to door⁵², but finds both its roots and its rationale in ancient society⁵³:

The existence of ambulatory merchants is in part a reflection of the familial organization of the preindustrial city, specifically the restriction of «respectable» womenfolk to the home. Ideally only a servant goes to the local market to purchase food and other provisions for the family. Or occasionally the men of the family do the marketing. But when the itinerant peddler comes to the house, the women have an opportunity to examine his goods and to make purchases themselves.

Services

The provision of various personal services was a crucial element in Roman society, and while many of these were performed by slaves, there were also workers of free status. Barbering was an important profession, since no one dared shave himself with the crude equipment available⁵⁴, and the regulations for the mining town of Vipasca grant a monopoly to the local barbering concessionaire⁵⁵. A recently published inscription from Corduba attests a seamstress (*sarcinatrix*) who is explicitly a freedwoman⁵⁶. Other

⁴⁷ Curchin, *Florilegium* 4 (1982), 39-40. To be able to afford an epitaph, these are presumably shopkeepers, not hawkers.

⁴⁸ G. Nicolini, *The Ancient Spaniards* (1974), 84-85.

⁴⁹ *Digest* 14, 3, 8, from Gaius' ninth book on the Provincial Edict: note however that this reference is to *institores*, not family.

⁵⁰ S. M. Imamuddin, *Muslim Spain 711-1492* (1981), 126-127.

⁵¹ L. Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, I (1768).

⁵² R. Way, *A Geography of Spain and Portugal* (1962), 307.

⁵³ G. Sjoberg, *The Preindustrial City* (1960), 202.

⁵⁴ J. Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (1940), 161.

⁵⁵ *ILS* 6891, lines 37-40.

⁵⁶ *AE* 1981, 502; cf. M. Maxey, *Occupations of the Lower Classes in Roman Society* (1938), 39 on this status.

essential professions, such as teachers and physicians, are amply attested in Spanish epitaphs⁵⁷; many of the *medici* are patently freedmen⁵⁸. More specialized service personnel include interior decorators and mosaicists, whose wage scales (in which, remarkably, the *pictores* far outstrip the *musaearii*) are preserved in Diocletian's price edict⁵⁹.

Administration

Non-slave administrators are also abundant. Elsewhere I have catalogued the various curators, secretaries and accountants (many of them free) in private employ⁶⁰. The apparitors of the magistrates at Urso (who were not «career» civil servants but twelve-month temporary appointments, since the charter states that they are exempt from military service during their year of employment) received a salary ranging from 1200 sesterces for a duovir's scribe, down to 300 for a flutist or herald. This seems to be their annual pay, since the apparitors in the first (partial) year receive a different pay rate⁶¹, but the figures are surprisingly low. How can we rationalize an annual salary of 300 sesterces (less than one per day) when, as discussed above, less skilled workmen were drawing three or four times that wage? The only solution I can see is that these attendants performed their function only on an «as-required» basis and in addition to their regular professions, and that their «salary» was almost an honorarium. This would explain not only the low pay but also the wage differentiation, since the duovir's two scribes would devote far more time to the magistrate's correspondence than the musicians would spend on the few public occasions requiring their services; and the *haruspex*, at 500 sesterces, perhaps clocked more hours than the musicians but less than the scribes. But other factors, such as the degree of skill involved—and the ability to read and write was probably rare among the lower classes of Republican Spain—or the difficulty of the labour, may have influenced these pay rates, and on present evidence we can only conjecture.

Imperial civil service employees, too, were often non-slaves, though of humble origin (*Augusti liberti*)⁶². This trend seems to have continued long after the Roman age; in sixteenth-century Spain civil service employees almost invariably came from the urban, and sometimes rural, lower classes⁶³. Finally, while this is not the place to discuss army recruiting, it should be

⁵⁷ Curchin, *Florilegium* 4 (1982), 41-42, 45.

⁵⁸ E.g. *ILER* 5729, 5731, 5732; *EE* VIII, 16.

⁵⁹ Curchin, *Florilegium* 4 (1982), 37-38; L. Abad Casal, *Pintura romana en España* (1982), 23; S. Laufer, *Diokletians Preisedikt* (1971), 118.

⁶⁰ Curchin, *Florilegium* 4 (1982), 43-44.

⁶¹ *ILS* 6087, chapters 62-63; cf. Th. Mommsen, *Juristische Schriften*, I (1904, reprint 1965), 259.

⁶² For Spanish examples see G. Boulvert, *Domestique et fonctionnaire sous le Haut-Empire romain* (1974), 351-352, under *CIL* II.

⁶³ Braudel, *o.c.* 681.

remembered that military service (especially in the *legio VII Gemina*) provided paid employment for many Spaniards⁶⁴.

Manual Labour

The least attractive form of labour was of the rugged, manual sort, such as construction and mining. These heavy tasks were often undertaken by slaves, but sometimes by free workers. The high demand for unskilled labour, particularly construction workers and dockers, has rightly been emphasized by Brunt⁶⁵, and will have provided a living for those with no marketable skills. The possibility of employing freedmen in manual labour was similarly recognized in mediaeval Barcelona, where ex-slaves represented the bulk of the dockers (known as *macips de ribera*, «shore-freedmen»)⁶⁶, and the custom may well have originated in antiquity.

For large-scale public works it might be necessary to resort to *corvée* labour. Chapter 98 of the Urso charter stipulates that each adult male between the ages of fourteen and sixty (including both the Italian colonists and anyone else resident or owning land in the colony) may be required by the decurions to contribute up to five days' compulsory labour on public *munitio*, i.e. probably roads and fortifications. Whether such resort was had to such conscription is debatable⁶⁷, and one might expect the decurions to rely on hired labour when they could afford it. The example of Q. Torius Culleo, who built a road between Castulo and Sisapo—a task which should have been the city's responsibility—at an apparent cost of several million sesterces⁶⁸, suggests that wage-labour was commonly used on such projects: if the expense was for materials alone it can hardly have been so high, since the necessary stone, gravel, etc., were available locally in this mountainous region.

Although work in the Roman mines was far from pleasant, there is evidence of free labour being employed there. The Dacian gold mines provide the best-known examples⁶⁹, but *mercennarii* are mentioned, in addition to slaves, as part of the work force in the quarries and slag heaps at Vipasca, and some free labour is attested in the Riotinto and Sierra Morena mines⁷⁰. Moreover, Diodorus Siculus claims (5, 36, 3) that in pre-Roman Spain, before the mass employment of slaves in the mines, even unskilled (but evidently free) men would work the then-shallow silver mines and come away with a fortune. The prospectors who extracted gold from the Tagus River

⁶⁴ P. Le Roux, *L'armée romaine et l'organisation des provinces ibériques* (1982), 322-340.

⁶⁵ P. A. Brunt, *JRS* 70 (1980), 92.

⁶⁶ C. Carrère, *Barcelone, centre économique à l'époque des difficultés 1380-1462* (1967), 88-89.

⁶⁷ Brunt, *o.c.* 82.

⁶⁸ R. P. Duncan-Jones, *JRS* 64 (1974), 80-82.

⁶⁹ *CIL* III, p. 948; S. Mrozek, *ANRW* II/6 (1977), 102-107.

⁷⁰ *ILS* 6891, line 49; Sánchez León, *o.c.* 158, 300.

(presumably by panning)⁷¹ were also assuredly free. It is perhaps worth observing that free labour is never represented at the bottom of Spanish mine-shafts, but seems confined to less dangerous mining jobs.

Conclusion

The foregoing survey has endeavoured to clarify and discuss the role of non-slave labour in the Spanish provinces. Our efforts are somewhat impeded by scarcity of evidence and, perhaps to a lesser degree, by our incomprehension of some of the social and economic values governing the labour market. Many questions remain unanswered. What was the proportion of slave to free, of libertine to free-born, or of self-employed to hired? To what extent did the decline in slave manpower in the Late Empire produce a compensatory increase in non-slave labour? How much status-consciousness or social difference was felt among servile and non-slave labourers working cheek by jowl in similar jobs on a daily basis (cf. the mixed *collegium* of slaves and freedmen of both sexes co-operating in a dedication at Segisamo in, perhaps significantly, the third century)⁷²? New ideas and new methodologies for dealing with such problems are eagerly awaited.

RESUMEN

This examination of non-slave labour in Spain complements existing studies on Italy, Gaul and Africa, and thus fills an urgent gap in our understanding of the Roman economy while providing a basis for comparison with the other western provinces. The role of Hispano-Roman non-slave labour in all major fields of economic activity (agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, services, administration, and manual labour) is systematically documented and discussed, using not only ancient evidence (literary, epigraphic, archaeological) but also parallels from other societies and survivals in mediaeval and modern Spain. Special attention is accorded to the role of the family in business, to the importance of casual hired labour, and to rates of pay and hiring procedures. The author demonstrates the crucial role played by non-slave labour in both the urban and rural sectors of the economy of Roman Spain, even in such jobs as mining and construction which are normally regarded as servile.

⁷¹ Pliny *NH* 33, 66. See M. Dolç, *Hispania y Marcial* (1953), 201 and J. M. Blázquez Martínez, *Caparra* (1965), 21-22 for ancient references to the *aurifer Tagus*.

⁷² *CIL* II, 5812=*ILER* 5825.

