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Imperial properties in Roman *Hispania*: the epigraphical evidence

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The Roman emperors owned several varied properties along the provinces of Iberian Peninsula, among them were: landed states, quarries, slaves and mainly mines. This vast richness was managed by a healthy team of financial procurators, imperial freedmen and slaves. Naturally, these individuals and their activities made a mark in the epigraphical record. However, despite the economic and social importance and the high political role of the properties of Roman emperors, in reality there is not any complete study dedicated to this subject for *Hispania*, nor throughout Roman Empire. Precisely, the ERC project PATRIMONIVM, in which our research is included and is intended to fill this gap conducting the first comprehensive and multidisciplinary socio-economic study of the properties of the Roman Emperors from Octavian/Augustus to Diocletian. This project is hosted by the Ausonius Institute at the Bordeaux Montaigne University and it is coordinated by Dr. Alberto Dalla Rosa. In this poster, we offer the main results of the epigraphical survey to be a starting point of this research matter.

The final outcome of this epigraphical survey has been 92 inscriptions related, directly or indirectly, with *patrimonium Caesaris* in *Hispania**. To start with, I am going to examine the distribution by provinces and cities. In this regard *Hispania Citerior* stand out with 56 records, more than half of our catalogue. But this should not surprise us because it is the largest province in *Hispania*. *Tarraco* offers 15, *Asturica Augusta* mineral capital of northwest- 10, *Villalis de Valduerna* 7, *Luyego* 3 and *Tresminas* also 3. On the other hand, *Baetica* provides 23 records, we should mention also, *Italica* with 5 epigraphs, and *Hispalis*, *Corduba*, and *Singilia Barba* each having 3. *Lusitania*, for its part, gave 11 records, 5 of them coming from *Emerita Augusta* and, the other 3 from the mining region of *Vispasca*.

With this information I have created a map with the dispersal of the epigraphical evidence related to the imperial properties. The big spots represent cities or areas that offer between 10 and 15 epigraphical records, the medium spots between four and five and finally the small spot only offers 1 inscription. In this research matter we are not only interested in the content of the epigraphs, that is to say, the text, but the place of origin is quite important. This map is very interesting because it offers us an initial approach to the geography of the *patrimonium Caesaris* in *Hispania*.

With regards to the content of our epigraphs, we have divided the inscriptions into four big thematic areas: slaves, mines and quarries, the *Kalendarium Vegetianum* and the management of the imperial properties. On an average of 56 epigraphical records that may be clearly assigned to a category, 19 of them are connected to the *servi Caesaris*, 28 to imperial mines and quarries, 6 to *Kalendarium Vegetianum* and finally, 3 to the financial stewardship of the *patrimonium*.

We have found a large number of epigraphs, concretely 19, that mention imperial slaves. Most of the slaves, and also enough freedmen, occupy management posts in the capitals of provinces ruled by the emperor, like *Emerita Augusta* and *Tarraco*. In other cases, their role is not expressed in the inscription. Another aspect that caught our particular attention is the abundance of imperial slaves recognized in the northwest of *Hispania*. We are speaking about pieces from: *Brigantium*, *Aquae Celenae* and *Castrofeito*. Probably, this *servi Augusti* may have been related with famous alluvial gold extracted in the rivers of this region.

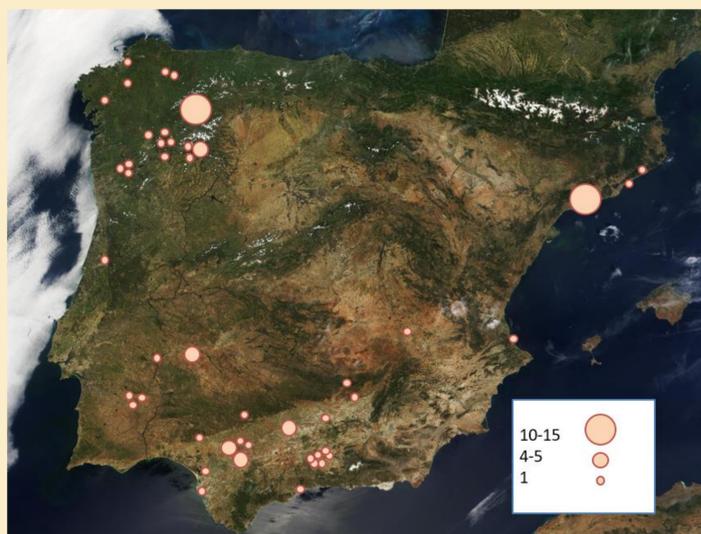
With reference to the mining, the own epigraphy indicates which were these mining areas ruled by the emperor: the *Mons Marianus*, the northwest mining area and the Iberian Pyrite Belt. 5 of the epigraphs provides us information about the mining of *Mons Marianus*. According to Tacitus (*Ann.* VI, 19, 1), *Sextus Marius* was the owner of both copper and gold mines which were confiscated by Tiberius. We know that this mining district was managed by a *procurator*. This has been shown by a pedestal found in *Hispalis* dedicated to *Titus Flavius Polychrisus*, *procurator montis Marianis*, and probably, which *Dorotheus* had. This imperial freedman was *procurator massae Marianae* according to an epigraph from *Ostia*. A votive inscription was found in the ancient mine called "mina del Centenillo," this piece names *Marcus Ulpius Hermeros*, *Augusti libertus*. Other mining cities of this area were *Obulco* and *Regina Turdulorum*. In *Obulco Succesianus*, *Augusti libertus* developed his activity. And *Privatus*, *dispensator et verna Augusti* was buried in *Regina Turdulorum*.

Nevertheless, the region which has offered more epigraphical evidence is the northwest mining area, mainly the district of El Bierzo, province of León. This should not surprise us because it was the most important gold mining area in the entire Roman Empire. In *Villalis de Valduerna*, *Luyego de Somoza* and *Truchas* an important group of ten epigraphs were discovered. Such inscriptions have the same external and internal features: votives pieces are devoted to *Iupiter Optimus Maximus* and for the health of emperors: *Marcus Aurelius* and *Lucius Verus*, *Marcus Aurelius* solo and finally *Commodus*. This epigraphical tribute was done in the anniversary of the *aquila*, the symbol of a *vexillatio*, a detachment formed by legionary of the *Legio septima*. Certainly, this *vexillatio* was responsible for protecting and guarding this mining district. In fact, all epigraphs were dedicated by a military officer: a decurion and also by a *libertus Augusti*. We know: *Aurelius Eutyches*, *Hermes*, *Zoilus* and *Aurelius Firmus*. All of them were *procuratores*, but only *Aurelius Firmus* noted his complete position as *procurator metallorum*. Another piece found in northwest mentions another imperial freedmen, *Marcus Ulpius Eutyches*, procurator of *metallum albocraensium*, probably a gold mining district. Finally, in *Tresminas*, situated in the north of *conventus Bracarensis*, were found three military inscriptions. The presence of troops in a mining area suggest that these mines were under imperial control

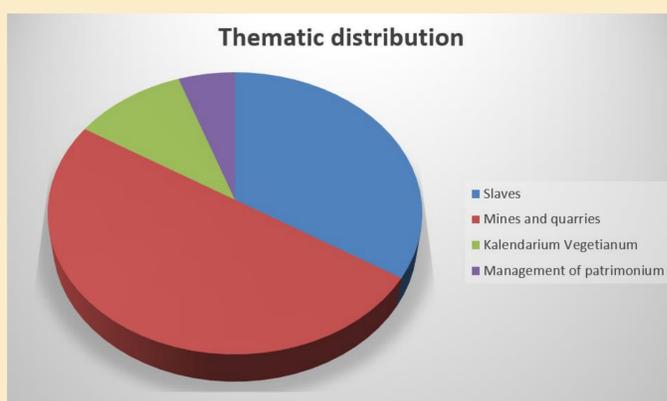
The third large roman mining region in *Hispania* was the Iberian Pyrite Belt. We know a freedman procurator, surely a *procurator metallorum*, named *Pudens*. This inscription was found in a mining town called *Fodinae Aeraria* situated in the modern Rio Tinto. And, of course we must mention the *Metallum Vipascense*, mostly known for the Bronze Boards of *Vipasca*. One of these texts was written formally in the nature of a letter to *Ulpius Aelianus*, procurator of the mining district. We know another procurator thanks to a base of statue dedicated to *Beryllus*, *Augusti libertus et rationalium vicarius*.

However, the emperors were not only interested in metal's mines. We have three pieces of epigraphical evidence about imperial marble quarries. In *Italica* two *tabulae marmoreae* were donated, one of them by *Marcus Caelius Alexander* who worked in a *statio serrariorum Augusti*. This was, according to some scholars, a marble workshop related to a quarry under imperial control. On the other hand, an *ara* was consecrate to *Endovellicus* by *Hermes*, *marmorarius* and slave of *Vibia Aurelia Sabina*, daughter of the emperor *Marcus Aurelius*. Moreover, this piece was discovered in the marble quarries region of Vila Viçosa, Borba and Estremoz, one of the most important marble zones in ancient *Hispania*.

Finally, six pieces provided us information about the *Kalendarium Vegetianum*. In general terms, a *kalendarium* was a loan funded and used by tenants farmers and clients to finance their agricultural or commercial activities using loans. The functions of the procurators or the economic activity of the *kalendarium* is not specified by the epigraphy. Nevertheless, the discovery of references to the *kalendarium* in amphoras Dressel 20 corroborated that the economic activity of this body was also related with the oil and amphora production. On the one hand, *Marcus Lucretius Iulianus* was procurator *kalendarii Vegetiani* and was honored in *Italica* with a statue. On the other hand, an epigraph found in *Ilipa*, tells us about *Lucius Cominius Vipsianus Salutaris* who was procurator of the *Baetica* and previously procurator of this imperial institution. This same position was held by *Tiberius Claudius Proculus Cornelianus* according with an epigraph of *Lambaesis*. To conclude, we must name three bases from *Singilia Barba*. Two of the inscriptions honor *Publius Magnus Rufus Magonianus*, an equestrian administrator who was *procurator Augusti per Baeticam ad kalendarium Vegetianum*. The third honors *Rufus'* wife, *Carvilia Censonilla*. Lastly, the epigraphical survey also gives us information about the financial management of the *patrimonium Caesaris*. One of the most important epigraphs of our catalogue is a pedestal found in *Italica* dedicated to *Marcus Rutilius Cosinius Gallus*, *procurator Augusti patrimonii Baeticae*. This is, up to now, the only *procurator* of imperial state known in the Iberian Peninsula. Additionally, we have information about subordinate staff, an epitaph from *Hispalis* was dedicated to *Felix*, probably an imperial slave, who worked as *dispensator arcae patrimonii*. Also we know a to *Aurelius Rufus* who served in *Emerita Augusta* as *tabularius provinciae Lusitaniae rationis patrimonii*.



Dispersal of the epigraphical evidence related to the imperial properties



Ara of Aurelius Rufus, *tabularius provinciae Lusitaniae rationis patrimonii* (ERAEmerita, 116)

*The total sum does not include the records provided by the amphoric epigraphy. Thanks to the Dressel 20 stamps we know that the Severan dynasty owned olive groves and pottery workshops located in *Baetica*.