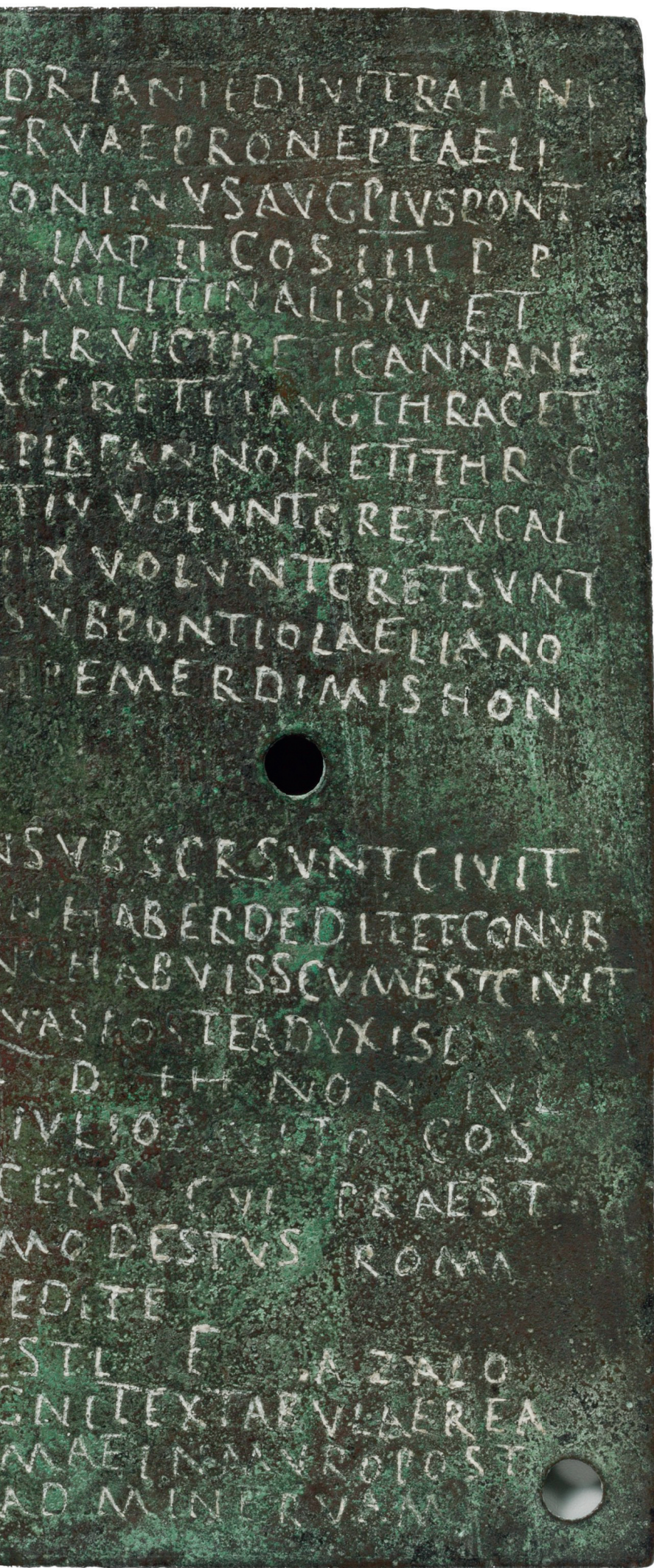




Land was the ideal store of wealth in the ancient Mediterranean world. It brought social respectability, and its possession allowed participation in the politics of the cities governed by landowning elites. Crucial defence of the interests of a given polity through armed services often involved the distribution of lands to labourers still not integrated in these societies. Mediterranean urban dynamics also involved paid labour and were always in need of short-contract manpower, including skilled soldiers and warriors. For short-time military services, lands were not always available so soldiers and warriors were paid with coins and riches.

Because of their superior development, urban economies in the Mediterranean were able to attract migrant paid labour. When returning home, the migrant warriors carried coins and riches that would enable them to maximise the return that a homecoming entailed. Although difficult to prove whether these men were paid in advance or when discharged, it is an important issue as it shows the strength of one contractor over another and helps to better understand the construction of statehood in ancient and early medieval times.

This collection of papers sheds light on how coins, riches, and lands were gained and distributed among soldiers, warriors, and mercenaries. Contributions cover a wide chronological span from Late Pharaonic to early medieval times, linking a well-defined core area, the Mediterranean basin, with its peripheries: Central Europe and Scandinavia to the north and the margins of the Sahara Desert and the Fertile Crescent to the south and the east.

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COINS, RICHES, AND LANDS

EDITED BY
LÓPEZ SÁNCHEZ, BUENO,
& MARTÍNEZ CHICO



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PAYING FOR MILITARY
MANPOWER IN ANTIQUITY
AND EARLY MEDIEVAL TIMES



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Prologue: Not only coins...

Fernando López Sánchez, Marisa Bueno, and David Martínez Chico

This book, *Coins, Riches, and Lands. Paying for Military Manpower in Antiquity and Early Medieval Times*, constitutes the proceedings of the congress entitled *Recruiting Soldiers and Discharging Veterans in Antiquity and Early Medieval Times*, organised by Fernando López Sánchez, Marisa Bueno and David Martínez Chico at the Complutense University of Madrid during 9, 10 and 11 December 2021. This Congress would not have been possible without the generous financial assistance of M^a Teresa Sisó of Aureo & Calicó, Subastas Numismáticas (Barcelona), who, more than any other person or institution, contributed to the success of the meetings, held in the Salón de Grados y de Actos of the Faculty of Geography and History of the aforementioned Complutense University of Madrid. Additional bodies contributing to the organisation and financing of this Congress were Prof. Rosa Sanz Serrano, president of the *Barbaricum* Association (Department of Prehistory, Ancient History and Archaeology, UCM), the AVIPES Research Project (financed by the Comunidad de Madrid and the European Social Fund) and the *Roman Cities* Research Group (UCM). Finally, the necessary funding needed for the printing of the book has been provided by the HUM T1/5650, CAM, 'Espacios Virtuales de la Alteridad', under the leadership of the Principal Investigator, Dr Marisa Bueno. This project deals with the cultural changes produced in the areas conquered by Islamic armies.

Many years ago, Max Weber wrote of 'economic zones' in which 'different sorts of services rendered' correspond to special types of goods, which mediate the payment function, so that different species of money exist side by side (Weber 1927, 237; Hollander 2007, 88). Karl Polanyi also observed that each type of money has its own use and that all kinds of exchange are reciprocal, redistributive, or commercial, while moving in their own circles (Polanyi 1968, 200). Similarly, several decades ago, Keith Hopkins proposed that the Roman economy operated on intersecting planes: the natural economy, the bronze, silver, and gold coinage economy, and the credit economy (Hopkins 1995–96, 61). This clearly indicates that an asset, simply by virtue of being a store of wealth, does not attain the status of money (Hollander 2007, 75). Most goods have some value, but very few typically

can be readily used to make transactions. In competition with other commodities, coinage is just another type of asset (and still very compartmentalised among its different metals) for the demand of individuals. However, the focus of this book will be on those assets that texts, archaeology and other ancient sources suggest were the most important: coinage, lands, and other riches (such as jewellery, grain, or furniture). The Latin word *pecunia* and the English word 'money' are similar, therefore it is hardly surprising that the former is frequently translated as the latter. Both terms are polyvalent, possessing a range of potential meanings such as 'coinage' or 'cash' or 'wealth' or 'riches'.

This book not only offers the contributions of most of the speakers who attended the conference in Madrid, but also presents many other valuable papers by renowned specialists, unable to attend in person at the time. The main topic that this volume seeks to explore is the means by which coins, riches, and lands were gained and distributed among the soldiers, warriors, and mercenaries in Antiquity and early medieval times. Consequently, the aim is to advance the study of military connectivity around the ancient Mediterranean and central and northern Europe, from Classical Greece throughout imperial Rome and the world of sub-Roman Europe, Byzantine, and Muslim eras. For clarity, the editors have preferred to organise the twenty contributions to the volume around three different themes: a first part dedicated to Classical Greece and the Hellenistic world, with four papers, a second group of chapters devoted to imperial Rome, both in the West and in the East, with eight contributions, and finally, a third section, interested mainly in the interaction of *externae gentes* with the Roman Byzantine or Muslim empires, also composed of eight studies.

Part 1: Land and *misthos* in Classical Greece and the Hellenistic world

The ideal store of wealth in the ancient Mediterranean world was, of course, the possession of land, which brought social respectability, and allowed participation in the politics of the cities governed by landowning elites. The distribution

of lands to labourers still not integrated in these societies was often necessary in the crucial defense of the interests of a given polity through armed services (Ñaco del Hoyo and López Sánchez 2018) and Daniel Gómez Castro discusses this interesting topic in his paper *Arcadian and Achaean soldiers in the Elean War (c. 402–400 BC)*. Land itself was a form of emergency money, particularly in the rural monetary zone, and in this respect, its role as a store of wealth was most important, although the Ancients still expected their lands to generate revenue. In order to pay off debts and thereby maintain their credit or generate the cash required for some emergency, they could sell land if necessary. It was also a useful source when seeking cash for pressing debts and other emergencies, if all other means failed. In the classical age, land was rarely used to pay mercenaries, and no mercenary expressly sought land. Similarly, in Hellenistic times, only kingly colonies were possible, for example Ptolemaic kleruchies, in the form of allotments given by the state to its soldiers. Discussing this topic and problematic constitutes John Serrati's paper, *Mercenary recruitment and settlement in Hellenistic Egypt: the failure of the kleruchy system*.

Despite the importance of land in the Ancient Mediterranean, urban dynamics also involved paid labour and were always in need of short-contract manpower, including skilled soldiers and warriors. Lands were not always available for short-time military services, so soldiers and warriors were paid with coins and riches. The word *misthophoros* had been used from at least the 5th century BC for any man who drew regular pay from any source and for any service. *Misthophoros* literally means a wage earner and is derived from the word *misthos* – wage. If a man earned money in the service of the state, he was called a *misthophoros*. The employer can be referred to as the paymaster or *misthodes* (Trundle 1996, 251), as remuneration was the basic relationship between the mercenary and the employer. Nevertheless, if *misthos* means a salary, it would be logical that it was paid for services rendered, not in the middle of a work period, but rather at the end of a period of work. Kenneth W. Harl explains this in his *Financing and maintaining the Peloponnesian navy*, the first article in this book: how rowers and soldiers alike were paid during the Peloponnesian war and how the state tried to organise, in the best possible way, their finances. Similarly, Nicholas Sekunda's *Macedonian financial and strategic planning for the Third Macedonian War* deals in detail with the ways a professionalised citizen body, the Macedonian state, became dependent on state pay. The costs of war were considerable and Hellenic armies, after the time of the Peloponnesian War, were largely mercenary.

Part 2: Services rendered and payments due to imperial Roman soldiers

The Roman empire, according to Keith Hopkins, created an expansion based on conquest, the importation of booty, the acquisition of slaves, and the distribution of land and

dependent labourers to a growing class of non-producers (Hopkins 1978). When the empire reached a zero rate of return in terms of spatial expansion, it was no longer able to provide the resources necessary to sustain its growing overhead costs. Consequently, it began to turn in upon itself, and eventually crumbled. Alberto González García and David Martínez Chico explain specifically, in *The Roman ban on exports and the Late Roman army (AD 350–450)*, how the Roman empire felt anxious about the possibility of losing its acquired upper hand, especially in everything regarding the possession of tools and items, which it considered to be essential in the preservation of its universal superiority. During the time of expansion and consolidation of its frontiers, Rome did not really need much coinage to conduct its business. However, from an economic point of view, two great interests of the state in coins lay in their use for payment, particularly of expenses associated with war and bureaucracy, and income in taxes and other receipts (booty, indemnities, etc.). Consequently, a big question for the military historian is the degree to which exchanges and payments in the military world came to be conducted in coined money.

Cristian Găzdac explores this question in *What coins were the Roman soldiers carrying in battle? The numismatic evidence from the military layer in the forum of colonia Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (Roman Dacia)*. Booty could certainly have also supplied some of that army's needs, but this was the least responsible way to pay for Roman soldiers in imperial times. On the other hand, bonuses, rewards, and discharge payments provide further proof that soldiers regularly received assets other than coinage in compensation for their service. Obviously, gold's compactness and high value relative to weight would have made golden coins an ideal choice for important campaigns, as observed in the study by David Martínez Chico and Alberto González García regarding this topic, *The Al-Salihyah hoard of gold aurei and the Roman conquest of Dura-Europos (c. AD 165)*. The government frequently distributed land to veterans as 'retirement bonuses', and again it is difficult to distinguish gift from payment. Although probably some bequests of land were essentially payments for services, the question remains of how precisely were riches, that is, un-coined gold and silver and other forms of exchange, normally used inside the military? Could they simply have been spent just as they were, or would they have been converted into coins? Had plate been converted into hack-silver for use as divisors, or had it been used as multiples of coins, even though this may not have necessarily been the case in many instances?

Assets in the form of payment pertain to a form of skilled wage labour in the shape of violence – a service sold by state or private military contractors led by entrepreneurial individuals, where Roman soldiers were paid not only for their skills in the battlefield but also for many other tasks they were able to perform. Sabino Perea Yébenes illustrates this side of the Roman soldier in his *Roman soldiers and*

public works in Roman Egypt in the 1st–2nd centuries AD, according to Greek and Latin epigraphy: some examples. The diffusion of the Roman public works throughout the world was part of a larger set of urban dynamics involving military wage labour, although this was an unintentional effect. To allow for a reasonable degree of certainty as to whether a payment should be considered evidence of recruitment or of discharge (*dilectio*) in the Roman army, *dilectio* being a voluntary bonus when the ruler was pleased with his army, various types of payment will be identified. David Serrano Ordozgoiti specifically seizes this delicate question in his *Satisfying soldiers and discharging emperors: the military propaganda of the emperors Gallienus and Postumus through the Lugdunum/Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium's mint coinage*.

Similarly, money was required ‘up front’ in the hiring process by the employers. At other times, however, a promise of the number of wages to be paid was enough to hire a body of men. No doubt both signing fees and promises of cash did apply at one time or another, but was the signing fee part of the payment of paid soldiers?

Evidence suggests that even if no money was paid out, the perception that the recruiter had money was enough to draw men into service. If cash was given at the start of their employment, did these advances set a pattern for the rest of their regular payments? Importantly, and to keep the loyalty of a force, would it be necessary to follow the up-front payment with advanced wages? However, the Roman commanders regularly found themselves in arrears with payments to their men, which suggests that even despite the lack of remuneration, the men did not abandon the campaign.

Therefore, it seems that warriors and soldiers did not expect payments in advance, and were rather paid towards the end of their employment for services rendered. Regarding the end of the service of soldiers, David Woods has written his *Ammianus Marcellinus on return to military service after discharge in the 4th-century AD Roman army* to help clarify this matter. Similarly, the hopes for their future must have lain for soldiers with other types of payment. Roger Bland addresses this and other issues in *A military coinage? The case of Gordian III*. On the other hand, soldiers were usually more interested in provisions and sustenance while on campaign, and the booty that they might have been able to carry home with them after the campaign's completion. To understand how important the use of coins among the military was, Michele Asolati has precisely composed his *La dispersione della moneta ‘per la Siria’ in Occidente: solo ragioni militari?*

Part 3: Foreign military contingents in Late Antique and early medieval empires

Because of their superior development, urban economies in the Mediterranean were able to attract migrant paid labour. When coming home, the migrant warriors carried

coins and riches that would enable them to maximise the return that a homecoming entailed. Aleksander Bursche's paper *Numismatic evidence of barbarian recruits between the 3rd century BC and 3rd century AD* gives a splendid overview of how central European ‘barbarians’ journeyed to the Mediterranean to offer their military services, and then returned to their homelands with coins and other items. Although it is difficult to prove whether these men were paid in advance or when they were discharged, the coins they brought back home indicate the strength of one contractor over another and gives a better understanding of the construction of networks in ancient times. In principle, it seems that often employers did not want hired men in service who lived so close to their own lands. Employment close to one's homeland diminished the dependency of the engaged on the employer or commander, and created vested interests in the nature of the campaigns.

It also affected the relationship between the men and the employer. Therefore, men related to specific networks could easily be recruited, used, and sent home with little political ramification. In this respect, Bartosz Kontny indicates how *The Roman army in Kuyavia, or the Barbarian-Roman brotherhood of arms* mirrored the inside of the empire with the building of a Roman army outside the empire. This explains that the explosion in the recruitment of barbarians did not occur because of regional poverty and political exile. The political situation in the Mediterranean in Antiquity, especially in Late Antiquity and early medieval times, created a greater need for larger numbers of men-at-arms than ever before. Therefore, the employees were of the nature the employers wanted, since those who were selected were of the provenance and type of men they used.

Following these and other examples, archaeologists and historians have begun to consider the relevance of core/periphery hierarchies for the evolution of earlier, smaller regional socio-economic systems. In addition to these complexities, the type of connection and the institutional nature of interactions are important. Somewhat controversial is the idea that in the modern world system, coreness and peripherality is fundamentally constituted around a division of labour in which the core produced manufactured goods, while the periphery manufactured raw materials and essentials, or provided the work force (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1991, 53). In Late Antiquity, however, a standardised political/military interaction between core and periphery, even if unequal, was important, and stimulated the rise and fall of chiefdoms and the emergence of primary states. It is well known that not all, and not even the most important, of these states were created and developed outwith the Roman empire, but rather within it in many cases. However, and because bulk goods networks typically have much smaller spatial boundaries than networks of prestige goods exchange, all types of material exchanges require examination. Consequently, Fernando López Sánchez studies in his *Pseudo-imperial coins and pseudo-imperial armies* how the

imitation coins circulating in the sub-Roman west after the collapse of the Western Roman empire were not a random accident, but a tool the Eastern Roman empire created to utilise client states.

States and leaders in Antiquity developed a policy where they favoured dealing with individual barbarian leaders, whom they rewarded with gifts and tributes, in order to facilitate communication and diplomatic ties. Therefore, it may be assumed that if people from various locations believed there was a profit to be gained by investing in a military expedition, consequently, this would allow them when returning home, to bring back novel items that would enable them to maximise what their homecoming entailed. Similarly, it can be assumed that there was a definite purpose for their return. It was about proprietorship and potency. Second and third sons could hope for an increased share of power at home, and even the landless among the returning veterans could expect to have a share. The factors that made men reluctant to remain in their homelands were not necessarily the reason why they left. These negative forces provided the context for military service abroad and in this volume, Hugh Elton investigates this topic in *The Roman army of Gainas*, of great importance around AD 400 at the heart of the eastern Roman empire.

It seems logical, and because of the aforementioned arguments, that no employed man in the industry of war expressly sought land in Late Antiquity, unless the employer could not pay in cash and was forced to settle his troops with allotments. Nevertheless, in the late Roman empire, there were many cases of the allotment of lands for elite warriors inside an empire serving the control of the imperial authorities of strategic networks of communication. *The settlement of the Alani in Late Antique Gaul* by Jeroen W.P. Wijnendaele and Guy Halsall is a good example of this policy developed during the later Roman empire. However, it was not only the Roman empire that did this, and it seems safe to argue that many rulers during Late Antiquity, all lacking sufficient reserves of gold and silver, had to rely on barbarian warriors to which they distributed land, but no valuable coins or riches. The paper *Landholding and military payment in the Arab conquest of Al-Andalus (AD 711–756)* by Marisa Bueno specifically explores how peripheral soldiers, such as the Berbers, could have been hired and paid with coinage first, but later forced to occupy important regions in southern Spain at the time of the Muslim conquest of Iberia. This procedure was due to the absence of cash to reward recently contracted contingents of Berbers.

It remains clear that warriors from distant lands could easily be hired, used, and sent home with little political ramification. *The employment of mercenaries during the Gothic War: AD 535–553* by Illas Ali Torrico offers a good account of this topic in the highly organised campaigns he studies. The return of the veterans to their homelands meant also that a distinct new material culture had suddenly emerged that could only be attained in three ways: 1) by joining in the homecomers' network, 2) by travelling to the campaigns themselves, or 3) by dispossessing a homecomer. But the migrant wages were never put back into the ancient economy again. Instead, these assets were taken to *Barbaricum* and hoarded on the periphery of the monetised economy. In his paper, *The recurring problem of Roman veterans in Migration period Scandinavia*, Svante Fischer explores this question regarding the Scandinavian men at arms who served in the Roman army during the 5th and 6th centuries. In many cases, barter was viewed in Antiquity in much the same way as most inhabitants of industrialised countries do today, that is, as a primitive form of pre-monetary exchange, whose use was confined to backward populations. However, to ignore barter transactions (or to relegate them to second class status) is to ignore some forms of *economic* activity, particularly rural economic activity in the periphery of the core, and to privilege others. In modern economics the distinction between money-use and barter primarily serves precisely to highlight differences in efficiency.

Madrid-Valladolid-Valencia, 23 May 2024

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