

# THE POOR, LATIN INSCRIPTIONS, AND SOCIAL HISTORY

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The urban poor in Roman social history are elusive at best. Problems begin with the identification of the segment of that population which we might correctly call 'the poor'. Fundamentally, the poor need to be defined from an "external" point of view — that is, the point of view of the observer, not of the "poor person" — which might be rather different. As a realistic image, we can think of the poor as falling into two groups. First, there are those who live an essentially hand-to-mouth existence, that is, those who have enough to stay alive, but not enough to save, invest, and use to "better themselves." This rather unscientific but easily understood measure would encompass the day laborers. It stops short of the middling folk, who have some resource cushion, but are not wealthy enough to break into the socio-political-economic world of the elite. It would exclude, also, a second group of poor, the destitute — who had no resources at all and lived by beggary and outlawry. It is worth noting that from the standpoint of the wealthy, all three of these groups were the 'poor'. But for my purposes, it is best not to think of middlingers as poor people, since they managed at an above-subsistence level.

We have poor quantifiable data from the Roman world — or the ancient world in general — to help us in determining the relative size of these groups; even the total population of the Empire is a guesstimate at perhaps 150 millions. Besides, the relative numbers would vary somewhat from place to place and from time to time. Nevertheless, if we can suppose a certain similarity

of basic pattern among pre-industrial societies in Europe and the Mediterranean area, and take what figures the Roman world gives us, we can get a very broad idea of what the Roman world must have looked like. Based upon studies of early modern Europe, where documentation exists to allow intelligent estimates of the size of various economic groups in society, we should estimate that about 50% of the population lived "on the edge"— that is, was at risk of death from any disruption of their subsistence existence by natural catastrophe, plague, famine or other disaster<sup>2</sup>. At the other end, the super-rich who comprised the elite in the Roman Empire numbered, in absolute terms, probably about 1,000; these were the 'billionaires' of the senatorial order. How many fell just below these super-rich is impossible to estimate. The professional salaries in the imperial government for the next "class" of Roman elite, the equestrian order, ranged from 50,000 to 600,000 sesterces per annum, or from about 30 times to about 300 times the annual pay of a legionnaire and perhaps 60 to 600 times that of a day laborer<sup>3</sup>. Those with

2. For comparative data from France: "Robert Fossier studied rural Picardy of the end of the 13th century. Here, 13% were indigents and beggars, 33% owned small parcels of land, but not enough to ensure survival in crisis times, 36% were peasants with more land, but no draught animals, and 19% were wealthy farmers. This percentage — roughly 50% of peasants living in abject poverty or on the brink — is shown in analyses of peasantries in other areas, as well." GEREMEK *o.c.* 57. "In the seventeenth century, Gregory King estimates as borderline, paupers and vagrants 47%, with the latter two at 24% of the population; The Marquis of Vauban gave a (contemporary) estimate of 10% beggars and 30% very poor/borderline in France." GEREMEK, *o.c.* 118-119

3. For rough comparison: a laborer in the United States working for minimum wage, eight hours a day, five days a week, fifty weeks a year would earn about \$10,000. A wealthy person with an income of \$1,000,000 would, therefore, make 100 times as much.

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1. For a good discussion of approaches to poverty, see GEREMEK, B., *Poverty: A History*. Oxford 1994, 1-13.

official posts in the order numbered perhaps 200-300 but, of course, many more equestrians did not take up government work. Then there would have been a number of wealthy local men who never took up an imperial career at all. In total probably no more than 200,000 adult males and perhaps one percent percent of the population was encompassed by the wealthiest<sup>4</sup>. This leaves 99% of the population as what the elite would call 'poor.' Of this number, I would estimate 45% of the middling sort, a figure approximately the same as that reached by Evan Haley in his study of *Wealthy Baetici*<sup>5</sup>. Their worldview would be significantly different from that of the free working-poor, as would their aspirations and potentialities. Working poor made up perhaps 35% of the population. Finally, the destitute are those who beg, steal, or otherwise operate at the margins of society in order to survive; they numbered perhaps 20%. Most of the emphasis in what follows is on the working-poor, but some attention must also be paid to the midlingers and destitute<sup>6</sup>.

I now turn to the main topic of this paper, the evidence that Latin epigraphy can provide to help us understand the circumstances of the poor. In general, these poor appear as either objects or subjects of inscriptional action. That is, inscriptions bear witness either to actions or perspectives that affect the poor, or actions and perspectives of the poor themselves. There are a number of places where non-elite — the working poor and destitute, as well as the midlingers — appear as the objects of inscriptional action. For example, the inscriptional evidence for the dole and *congiaria* at Rome, or for the alimentary schemes of Italy<sup>7</sup>. The middlinger and working poor appear as subjects in a variety of inscriptional data as well. They appear as members of *collegia*, and in sepulchral inscriptions. The destitute poor appear only as objects, in the occasional reference to outlawry. I begin with an examination of the poor as object.

Euvergetism had a long and fruitful life in the Roman world. Benefactors needed benefactees —

persons to whom to give. Although some Romans disparaged giving to anyone who could not offer a 'return' on the gift, the social system which put a high value on *noblesse oblige* and gaining/maintaining social standing by performing public service of one sort or another found a place for gifts which did not offer the possibility of immediate, concrete reciprocity. Social, rather than material, 'capital' was the result, and a highly valued result indeed. The most spectacular epigraphic evidence for largess is the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*. In section 15 of this self-elogium, Augustus details his huge benefactions to the Roman plebs<sup>8</sup>.

In thinking about the poor as the object of this type of inscriptional action, it is important to decide who the *plebs* or *populus* is. If we would like to think about who is helped by, e.g., the grain dole in Rome or donatives from the emperor, it is crucial to know who the recipients are, or at least what the possible range of recipients is<sup>9</sup>. The simplest solution is that anyone enrolled in a tribe, and so recorded as a citizen, would be eligible. But this over-arching and legally correct definition of *plebs* has run into trouble as we attempt to measure the role of distributions on the poor<sup>10</sup>. Most specifically, the general opinion is that the reduction of dole recipients by Caesar included an attempt to cull the wealthy from the rolls, as well as those not citizens or not domiciled in Rome. But the ancient sources fail to indicate any such restriction by income, and surely Van Berchem remains correct in thinking that the poor were not given any special consideration in the official process of distribution<sup>11</sup>. At any rate, by the

8. Found conveniently with commentary in BRUNT, P.A.; MOORE, J.M. (edd.), *Res Gestae Divi Augusti. The Achievements of the Divine Augustus*, Oxford 1967, section 15, p. 25-26.

9. Certainly it is wrong to think that only the poor benefitted from distributions, even though surely they benefitted most. VAN BERCHEM, *o.c.*, 16-17 rightly notes that although the wealthy would not likely have taken advantage of the distribution, they were nonetheless eligible to do so.

10. There was a list of recipients, not congruent with the most recent census records. This record was kept up to date with new enfranchisees — mostly from freed slaves — and new arrivals in Rome, for from Pompey's time those citizens domiciled outside Rome were not eligible for the dole. So the list was a sub-set of Roman citizens, and was kept, presumably, as a bureaucratic activity separate from but depending on the recording of membership in the tribes (fundamental to citizenship), controlled, if desired, by up-to-date information. For example, when Caesar culled the list of 320,000 recipients to 150,000 in 46 BC, he conducted a house-by-house survey to enforce the residency requirement: "*recensum populi nec more nec loco solito, sed vicatim per dominos insularum egit*", SUET., *div. Jul.* 41. Cf. VAN BERCHAM, *o.c.*, 21.

11. Ancient sources indicating that all citizens were eligible include LIV., *Per.* 115; PLUT., *Caes.* 55; APP., *BC* 2.15.102; DIO, 43.21.4, 25.2. Cf. VAN BERCHAM, *o.c.*, 22-23.

4. ALFÖLDY, G., *The Social History of Rome*, London 1985 [orig. German 1975], 147. Cf. also HUTTUNEN, P., *The Social Strata in the Imperial City of Rome: A Quantitative Study of the Social Representation in the Epitaphs Studied in the CIL VI*, Oulu 1974.

5. HALEY, E., *Wealthy Baetici*, Austin 2003.

6. For a discussion of categories of the poor, see WHITTAKER, C.R., "The Poor", GIARDINA, A., *The Romans* (trans. L.G. Cochrane), Chicago 1993 (original Italian 1989), 278-279.

7. VAN BERCHEM, D., *Les distributions de blé et d'argent à la plèbe romaine sous l'Empire*, Geneva 1939, 24-25 on, particularly, the *Tabula Heracleensis*.

middle of Augustus' reign, almost all citizens in Rome were eligible, as under Pompey's earlier dispensation<sup>12</sup>. Certainly, working men were eligible<sup>13</sup>. And there is no reason to suppose that even the poorest citizen was excluded. Only members of the senatorial and equestrian orders were ineligible<sup>14</sup>. The same citizen population was eligible for gifts in kind, *congiaria*, as for the grain dole<sup>15</sup>. It also should not go without saying that all non-citizens, rich and poor alike, would be ineligible for benefactions such as are noted in the *Res Gestae* and elsewhere.

Paul Veyne and others have incorporated into their work many other instances of benefactions which would have included the poor as recipients; many of these are inscriptionally attested. There is no need to dwell on further examples. Likewise, it is enough to mention the other large category of 'subject' poor in inscriptions, the alimentary schemes of the Empire<sup>16</sup>. We have a number of inscriptions which also detail measures for taking care of children, presumably orphans from among the 'poor' — the large category which, for the aristocracy, would have encompassed everyone below them on the social/economic scale, although the destitute citizens were not targeted — rather the middlingers and working poor<sup>17</sup>. The inscription from Tarracina (Italy) is a representative example:

*Caelia C. f. Ma[c]rin[a] ex [test]ament[o] H[ic] S[ed] C[on]s[ul]t[is] fieri iussit. In cuius ornatum / et tu[te]llam HS ... reliq[ui]d. Eadem in memoria[m] Macri filii sui Tarricinensibus / HS [X] r[eli]quid, ut ex reditu eius pecuniae darentur cen[t]um pueris alimenter[u]m nomine sing. / mensib[us] si]ng. pueris colonis X V, puellis colonis si]ng. in mens. sing. X IIII, pueris usq. ad annos XVI, puellis / usq. ad] annos XIII, ita ut semper C pueri C puellae per successiones accipiant<sup>18</sup>.*

An epigraphically rich source of information about the poor comes from the inscriptions men-

tioning *collegia*<sup>19</sup>. These associations have been well studied<sup>20</sup>. The best examples for current purposes is the collegial charter from Lanuvium<sup>21</sup>. Here we get a clear view of persons of modest means investing in their social and funeral lives. For an entrance fee of 100 sesterces and an amphora of good wine, which probably cost about 30 sesterces, and dues of two asses, the cost of a loaf of bread, a person has access to friendly conviviality once a month, and buys burial insurance<sup>22</sup>. The figures involved show that the relatively poor are the membership. The entrance fee would amount to about sixty days' pay for an unskilled laborer, a month's pay for a skilled worker<sup>23</sup>. This is a tidy sum, but thereafter the monthly dues are only five asses, or 24 sesterces for the year — only 6-12 days' pay for the entire year — although, of course, few unskilled laborers would have actually been fully employed throughout the year<sup>24</sup>. The death benefit alone is 300 sesterces, so in just over eight years, the benefit would exceed the

19. ABBOTT, F.F., *The Common People of Ancient Rome*. New York 1911, 226-227: "To read these twenty-five hundred or more inscriptions [mentioning *collegia*] from all parts of the Empire brings us close to the heart of the common people. We see their little ambitions, their jealousies, their fears, their gratitude for kindness, their own kindness, and their loyalty to their fellows".

20. WAITZING, J.P., *Étude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les Romains*, Louvain 1895-1900 and AUSBUETTEL, F.M., *Untersuchungen zu den Vereinen im Westen des römischen Reiches*, Kallmünz 1982. A brief summary is by WHITTAKER, *o.c.*, 296-297.

21. ILS 7212 = CIL XIV, 2112

22. DUNCAN-JONES, *o.c.*, 364-365 estimates good wine from Pompeian and Herculaneum evidence to cost between 24 and 54 sesterces; of course it would cost more in Rome. A loaf of bread he estimates at .75 sesterces, or 3 asses, in Rome, so probably the 2 asses at Lanuvium paid for a loaf there — cf. Duncan-Jones' chart, p. 223.

23. I am estimating skilled labor at a denarius = 4 sesterces a day; unskilled labor at half a denarius = 2 sesterces a day.

24. One aspect of the life of the working poor that cannot be overemphasized is that the norm would be underemployment. While Van Berchem, for instance, as others, blames the institution of free grain distribution for wide-spread unemployment in Rome, this can hardly have been the whole, or even the most important part, of the story. (VAN BERCHAM, *o.c.*, 20: "La rente que l'Etat servait aux citoyens ôtaît à ceux-ci l'obligation de travailler. Le chômage devint à Rome un état normal, avec tout ce qu'il comporte de démoralisation".) In any preindustrial society, underemployment is chronic. It is also hardly likely that 'man could live by bread alone' — i.e., that the dole alone could support perpetual unemployed status. WHITTAKER, *o.c.*, 288 notes that 250 days or fewer of work a year was the norm in medieval Milan and Paris. Furthermore, it is misleading to look at the festival days in Rome — 159 days and more — and assume that those were days without work for the working poor. Surely then day laborers worked whenever hire was available for two reasons: first, the fact that a day without work was a day without pay; second, the fact that underemployment was endemic and so when work was available, it had to be taken, if there was to be any chance of making ends meet.

12. DIO. HALIC., 4.24; cf. SUIET. *div. Aug.* 42.

13. SUIET., *divi Aug.* 40: "ne plebs frumentationum causa frequentius ab negotiis avocaretur, ter in annum quaternum mensium tesserarum dare destinavit; sed desideranti consuetudinem veterem concessit rursus, ut sui cuiusque mensis acciperet."

14. VAN BERCHAM, *o.c.*, 55.

15. VAN BERCHAM, *o.c.*, 127-128. Cf. SUIET., *Cal.* 17: "congiarium populo bis dedit trecenos sesterios, totiens abundantissimum epulum senatui equestrique ordini, etiam coniugibus ac liberis utrorumque."

16. DUNCAN-JONES, R., *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, 2nd ed. Cambridge 1982, 340-341 lists 29 private and 6 publically funded alimentary schemes, all attested epigraphically.

17. A point now widely made by those who write on the alimenta schemes. See, e.g., WHITTAKER, *o.c.*, 294-295.

18. ILS 6278 = CIL X, 6328 (Terracina).

cost of the entrance fee plus monthly contributions<sup>25</sup>. As far as I know, it is never stated if the *collegium* pays for the tombstone, or not, as a matter of course, although there is evidence of the *collegium* setting this up<sup>26</sup>. The Lanuvium by-laws document that the funeral and contributions to mourners is covered — but a stele or *olla* in a columbarium is not noted. Indeed, a stele, at least, would seem to have to have been quite cheap to be covered in the 300 sesterces available for the funeral<sup>27</sup>. The list of stele costs in Friedländer, now very old admittedly, gives 83 examples, with 5000 sesterces being the median price and 200 sesterces being the cheapest mentioned<sup>28</sup>. There is a recently published inscription from Spain which gives the cost of the stele as eight sesterces<sup>29</sup>. Inscriptional evidence for the cost of an *olla* for ashes indicates that these could be had cheaply, as well; for example, two inscriptions record the cost of an *olla* as 1 HS<sup>30</sup>. So even taking into consideration the lower cost of gravestones and urns in the provinces — many of Friedländer's cheaper stones are from North Africa — if a modest stone could be had for this price or something close

to it, that stone could have been included in the 300 sesterces for burial. On the whole, I think it is best to assume that a receptacle or a grave marker was included for the poor who belonged to the burial clubs. But of course the utility of the club went far beyond the burial insurance. Each month there was a party to which, admittedly, a contribution had to be brought by the participant — but the food was provided from the resources of the club, either return on the investment of the club's funds, or from a patron. So for a very modest investment, the poorer Roman could mix and mingle with the people he spent his life with — other free persons of modest means, freedmen, and slaves.

Of more interest, perhaps, because less well known, are inscriptions that throw light on how the non-poor looked at the poor. We in the West are used to thinking in terms of charity being a good thing, basic to human values and human society. This attitude does not come from the Greeks and the Romans, however, but from the Judeo-Christian tradition which melded with classical tradition through the spread of Christianity<sup>31</sup>. For the wealthy Romans, the poor had their uses, but certainly there was no obligation to help those who were poor. When Bolkestein wrote what is still the fundamental work on the poor in the classical world, he thought he had found three inscriptions which showed that Romans had begun to be influenced by what he typified as 'oriental' ideas of charity as early as the Late Republic<sup>32</sup>. Of these three, McGuire has disposed of two, showing that they are not from the Late Republic and, in all likelihood, reflect not a spread of 'oriental' ideas westward, but the retention of 'oriental' ideas of freedman of eastern origin<sup>33</sup>. However, the third inscription is worth dwelling on<sup>34</sup>.

25. Burial societies: FRIEDLÄNDER, L., *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire*, vol. 1, New York 1913, 152. If a day-laborer averaged 2HS = 8 asses a day, 5 asses monthly fee would be less than half a day's wage. At \$5.25/hr, a day's wage would be 8 x this = \$42. The equivalent to 5 asses = \$26, not too much for a monthly fee. HALEY, O.C., provides a good summary of the thinking regarding subsistence income and average yearly income for the working poor; various scholars using various methods arrive at a figure of 400-500 sesterces for subsistence, and a figure of about 1000 sesterces for average yearly earnings, or about 3 sesterces per day.

26. ILS 7319 = CIL IX, 2964 (Montenero d'Omo, in the territory of the Frentani [Italy]): L. Aebutio / Martiali / colleg. / Herculaniorum / p. ILS 7327 = CIL XII, 2677 (Alba Helvorum): d. m. / Tutiliae / Laudicae / cultrices / collegi / Fulginiae. ILS 7331 d.m.a. / Gavolena / Cypridi ex / coll. Larum / Marcellini. ILS 7337 = CIL II, 379 d.m. / M. Iul. Serano / in itinere urb. / defuncto et / sepulto, Coelia / Romula / mater filio / piissimo / et collegium / salutare / f. c. ILS 7338 = CIL X, 1588 dis man[ibus sacrum] / Theseo et Sy[ro] ... / ex collegio salu[tari] / familiae Valer[ianae].

27. DUNCAN-JONES, O.C. 131 seems to think that the 300 sesterces included or even was exclusively for the cost of the monument. However, even if the monument is paid for from the 250 sesterces remaining after the distribution is made, we don't know how much that monument might normally cost — but certainly not the entire 250 sesterces.

28. FRIEDLÄNDER, O.C., vol. 4, 279-284.

29. *Hispania Epigraphica* 5, 1995, no. 67 = *Hispania Epigraphica* 1, 1989, no. 87 = AE 1986, 312.

30. ILS 7912 = CIL VI, 10241 (Rome): d. m. / M. Herreni / Proti, u.a. XXII / m. II d.V. fecerunt parentes / M. Herrenius Agricola et / Herennia Lacena (sic) filio. / Chirographum: ollaria n. IIII, / cineraria n. IIII intransibus par/te laeva, que (sic) sunt in monumento / T. Flavi Aretmidori, quod est via / Salaria in agro Volusi Basilides (sic) / ientibus (sic) ab urbe parte sinistra, do/nationis causa manicipio accepit / M. Herrenius Agricola de T. Flavio / Artemidoro IIS n. I, libripende M. / Herennio Iusto, antestatus est T. Iuliu Erotem, ...

31. BOLKESTEIN, H., *Wohltätigkeit und Armenpflege im vorchristlichen Altertum*, Utrecht 1939.

32. BOLKESTEIN, O.C. 473-474.

33. MCGUIRE, M.P., "Epigraphical Evidences for Social Charity in the Roman West", *American Journal of Philology* 67, 1946, 129-150. Incorrectly cited by VEYNE, P. as MacGuire, and with wrong pagination, *Bread and Circuses*, London 1990 (original French 1976), note 16 to chapter 1. The two Bolkestein cites which are probably by 'orientals' are CIL VIII, 7858 and CIL IX, 4796. WITTAKER takes notice of this, and as McGuire, notes the dedicator's apparently eastern origin: "It is significant that the only inscription known to commemorate a dead man for being a 'lover of the poor' was that of a Greek foreigner (ILLRP, 797)", WITTAKER, O.C., 297.

34. *Hospes resiste et hoc ad grumum ad laevam aspice, ubi / continentur ossa hominis boni misericordis amatis / pauperis. Rogo te, viator, monumento huic nil male feceris. / C. Ateilius Serrani I. Euhodus margaritarius de Sacra / Via, in hoc monumento conditus est. Viator, vale! / Ex testamento in hoc monumento neminem inferri neque / condi licet, nisei eos lib. quibus hoc testamento dedi*

Here, there does seem to be a sensitivity to the poor, for whatever reason. But, although Veyne extrapolates from this one instance when he writes, "This accent [on helping the poor], so much unlike civic sternness, is to be found elsewhere also," we look in vain for another inscription like the one just quoted. It seems to be a unique expression in the West of a sensibility widely expressed in the literature of Near East from earliest times<sup>35</sup>. Indeed, the graffito from Pompeii seems more typical of the attitude towards the poor:

I hate poor people. If anyone wants something for nothing, he is a fool. He should pay for it<sup>36</sup>.

Finally, we can turn to gravestones. Not surprisingly, all of the data for the cost of grave monuments which Friedlander and Duncan-Jones accumulated indicate quite expensive monuments<sup>37</sup>. Friedlander gives prices of monuments. The cheapest is 200 HS by a *decurio coh. II Hisp.* from Lambaesis<sup>38</sup>. The median for his list of eighty-three amounts is 5,000 HS. At a generous estimate of a denarius a day income for a worker, this would be almost fourteen years' income — like a modern laborer spending \$140,000 on a grave. The 200 HS/50 denarii monument by the *decurio* would be much more within reach of the average working poor<sup>39</sup>. *ILS 8104*, from Rome, gives the details of another modest expenditure for a grave area:

*d.m. / Olus Puplicius Polyti/mus, tutor Titi Flavi A/gathangeli, pupilli sui matri / Sextae Fortunae defu/nctae locum emit, massam / calcavit, cupam edificavit; de bon/is eius omnibus consummat, X (denariis) CCXXV, cur. /fac*<sup>40</sup>.

But even at that, it is important to realize that a gravestone could be bought for much less. From Casas de Don Pedro (Badajoz) comes the following inscription:

*D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) / Cosconia L(ucii) f(ilia) / Materna Mirobri / gen[si]s an(norum) LX h(ic) / s(st) s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis) / tes[t]amento fier(i) iussit / ex HS (sextertiis) VIII*<sup>41</sup>

The stone is of good quality marbleized limestone, well cut, with a simple, linear decorative frame. It is far from the poorest stone from the area, where many inscriptions are roughly cut in granite. While not large (42.5 × 60 cm), it is certainly of respectable size, with well-cut letters 5-2 cm high. This inscription is clear evidence that for eight sesterces, two denarii, a modest stone could be cut<sup>42</sup>. This would only be six-months' dues for a burial club such as that at Lanuvium, and probably less than the cost of the contribution for the monthly dinner of that *collegium*. While we have to remember that the inscription comes from a rural areas of Hispania, and so prices would be low, even at three or four times the price, this gravestone is a firm reminder that the working poor would be able to afford a gravestone, even though the actual dedicant of this particular stone is unlikely to have been from a working family<sup>43</sup>. When we collect gravestone information and

*tribuique. ILS 7602 = CIL I, 1027 = VI, 9545 (Rome, late Republic).*

35. VEYNE, *o.c.*, 24-27: VEYNE, *o.c.*, 24 writes, "these charitable practices [of the Church] continued to flourish because they found in popular pagan ethics a field ready for sowing". But Veyne never shows that there was any such 'popular pagan ethics' unless he is referring to the three inscriptions above! He asks the question, "Did paganism already include the duty to show consideration, equity, mildness, mutual aid, and everything we could call the spirit of the Gospels; or does the West owe its everyday physiognomy to Christianity", but never answers it (*o.c.*, 25). In fact he says, "Charity was an alien morality that became acculturated in Rome" (*o.c.*, 25), which implies that it was not 'popular pagan ethics' at all, which he reifies by [the Church created] "a popular morality imposed on everyone in the name of religious principle;" *o.c.*, 30-31: "The fact is that paganism helped some of the poor without naming them. It helped others on the grounds that they were destitute. ... But there were also many poor whom paganism did not help at all. On the whole, paganism showed itself much less charitable in deeds than Christianity was to be, even if it was charitable to a small extent."

36. *CIL IV, 9839b.*

37. DUNCAN-JONES, *o.c.*, 127-131.

38. FRIEDLANDER, *o.c.*, vol. 4, 279-284. relating to text vol. 2, 217

39. DUNCAN-JONES, *o.c.*, 1982 128 gives 96 HS as the lowest price of an African burial monument, one at Lambaesis: *CIL VIII, 3042, cf. 18162.*

40. *ILS 8104 = CIL VI, 25114.*

41. *Hispania epigraphica* 5, 1995 no. 67 p. 23 = PASTOR MUÑOZ, M.; PACHÓN, J.A.; CARRASCO RUIZ, J., *Mirobriga. Excavaciones arqueológicas en el "Cerro del Cabezo" (Capilla, Badajoz). Campañas 1987-1988*, Mérida 1992, 35-36, no. 19, photo plate 40. The stone is 'caliza marmorea'.

42. It is probably just coincidence that the contribution of each member of the 'familia Silvani' at Trebula Mutuesca was 8 sesterces, to go into a common fund to pay the expenses, notionally then 560 sesterces, of the funeral for a deceased member: *AE 1929, 161, 16-17; cf. NS (1928) tav. V, p. 394; see DUNCAN-JONES, o.c., 131.*

43. For lower prices in Spain cf. MART. *Ep.* 12.31; 10.96. DUNCAN-JONES, *o.c.*, 345. For the sake of illustration, let us assume that Cosconia has the minimum census of a local juror at Irimi, i.e., 5,000 sesterces. This property worth would generate, conservatively, 250 (5%) to 300 (6%) sesterces a year in income. At 8 HS, the gravestone would have cost Cosconia .032 of a year's income. DUNCAN-JONES, *o.c.*, 79, 130 has in his tables shown that there are other examples of tombstones representing only a small fraction of annual income — even as low as .05-.03 in African examples.

study it, it is therefore safe to suppose that the entire spectrum of the population, save the destitute, can be represented in the data although, unfortunately, it remains impossible to tell the income-level of any specific dedicant<sup>44</sup>.

Finally, I would like to point out an example of the destitute appearing in Latin epigraphy. While we cannot know for certain that a thief or a highwayman was in origin a destitute, the ancient sources and modern analogies both indicate that abject poverty drove people to outlawry<sup>45</sup>. These outlaws appear in inscriptions as the agents of murder. For example these inscriptions:

*d.m. / Val. Marcus / vixit annis / XVIII a la/tronibus / interfectus, / Val. Eutyclus et Sextil[i]a / Frontina / filio / b.m.p.*

*Iulio Timo/theo qui vixit p. m. annis / XXVIII, vitae in/nocentissime, / decepto a latr/onibus cum / alumnis n. VII, / Otacilia Narcisa coniugi dul/cissimo.*

*L. Atilio L. l. / Saturnino / annor. XL domo / Fl. Scarbantia interfec. / a latronibus in Rtusis, / Atilius Tertius frater / et Statius Onesimus / amico, / loc. gratuit. dat. ab / Clodia Tertia.*  
*Euplo, / ann. XXV, occis. / a viatoribus<sup>46</sup>.*

In all of these examples, a traveller has been attacked and killed by outlaws.

It comes as no surprise that the amount of information about the poor to be gleaned from Latin inscriptions is not great. Nevertheless, the poor are far from invisible. In addition to the examples I have adduced here, I could add the inscriptions of tenant farmers to the Emperor for relief from an oppressive procurator, or the eloquent statement of a peasant of Maktar's rise from poverty to riches<sup>47</sup>. As objects of actions, actors in life, and as individuals recording their lives and deaths, the poor of Roman society have left their mark in Latin epigraphy.

44. The destitute would not, of course, have any monument at all, but were buried in mass graves. WHITTAKER, *o.c.*, 286-287; DUNCAN-JONES, *o.c.*, 131.

45. *Ap., Met.* 7.4-5, with the sound interpretation of SHAW, B., "The Bandit", GIARDINA, *o.c.* 328-329.

46. *ILS* 8504 = *CIL* III, 14587 (Rauna in Serbia); *ILS* 8505 = *CIL* VI 20310 (Rome); *ILS* 8507 (Aquileia); *ILS* 8508 = *CIL* III, 9054 (Salonae).

47. *E.g.*, *CIL* VIII, 10570, 14.464 (tenants), *CIL* VIII, 11824 = *ILS* 7457 (Maktar).