SLAVES IN LUSITANIA:
IDENTITY, DEMOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS
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SUMMARY: An analysis is made of inscriptions from Lusitania naming slaves, which is necessarily limited to persons explicitly identified as servi or the like. A substantially higher proportion of male slaves reflects not only an emphasis on physical labour, but also the possible exposure of female vernaes. Although recorded ages suggest that many slaves died young, the evidence does not include those who were manumitted. Finally, the inscriptions provide interesting information about relations between slaves and their parents, owners and partners.

KEYWORDS: demography, epigraphy, family, Hispania, inscriptions, Lusitania, slavery, social relations

RESUMEN: Se presenta un análisis de las inscripciones lusitanas que mencionan los esclavos, limitado necesariamente a personas identificadas de manera explícita como servi o similares. Una proporción bastante más alta de esclavos masculinos refleja tanto un énfasis en el labor físico como una posible exposición de vernaes femeninas. Según las edades atestiguadas, muchos esclavos habrían muerto como jóvenes, pero esta documentación no incluye esclavos manumitidos. Además, las inscripciones proporcionan interesantes informes sobre las relaciones de esclavos con sus padres, sus dueños y sus cónyuges.
PALABRAS-CLAVE: demografía, epigrafía, esclavitud, familia, Hispania, inscripciones, Lusitania, relaciones sociales
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Introduction

The importance of slavery in the Roman world hardly requires emphasis. Possession of slaves served a dual purpose, not only to perform labour and produce wealth, but also to create leisure and prestige for their owners (Vlassopoulos, 2016, 14-15). In the province of Lusitania there are numerous inscriptions providing information on slaves. However, previous studies of Lusitanian slaves have focused on slavery as an economic rather than a social reality. While no one would deny the importance of unfree labour in the ancient economy, Roman slavery “has to be approached above all as a social institution” (Bradley, 1994, 4). The discussion by Francisco Martín (1989, 187-213) is concerned almost solely with the importance of servile labour in mines, agriculture and as public slaves. An earlier book by Mangas, again concerned largely with slave labour, includes a few pages on relations between slaves and owners and on slave families (Mangas Manjarrés, 1971, 70-74, 130-131); but because of the scope of the work, covering all three Hispanic provinces as well as comparative evidence from ancient

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