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J. F. DRINKWATER

Gallic Personal Wealth

A number of literary references serve to suggest that the wealth of the Three Gauls was famous, not to say notorious, throughout the Roman world.¹ Such general remarks are interesting, but difficult to employ in developing any further argument; a proper historical assessment demands that this wealth be in some way quantified and related to other areas within the Empire. Hard figures are not common in the Gallic evidence, but not so rare as one might think; careful examination of volume XIII of the *Corpus*, with its attendant supplements, produces over twenty costings of a variety of goods and services. Useless on their own, these figures can now be set against the much more extensive information for Italy and Africa recently collected and presented by DUNCAN-JONES.² Of course the comparison is bound to be crude; individual items derive from quite different areas and times, yet little can be done to compensate for contemporary variations in local costs, or overall movements in price-inflation which resulted from the continuing debasement of the imperial coinage.³ Nevertheless, to take a simple modern example, £ 1,000 spent in the India of 1900 and £ 1,000 spent in the United Kingdom of today may both be taken to represent *large* amounts of money, beyond the casual spending of the ordinary man in the street, and so be worthy of notice. Reservations have to be made, but the experiment may still profitably be undertaken. I have chosen to compare Gallic prices with DUNCAN-JONES's African tables with the aim of restricting comparisons to the *provincial west*; the Italian information, I feel, stems from economic conditions heavily influenced by the metropolis, and so has been left to one side.

¹ Strabo 4, 2, 3; Velleius 2, 39, 1; Josephus, BJ 2, 364; Martial, ep. 9, 32, 5 f.; Tacitus, ann. 11, 23, 4; cf. C. E. STEVENS, in: *France, Government and Society*², ed. J. M. WALLACE-HADRILL and L. McMANNERS, 1970, 25 f.

² R. DUNCAN-JONES, *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, Cambridge 1974.

³ For a useful survey see R. A. CARSON, *The inflation of the third century*, *Proceedings of the international numismatic convention*, ed. A. KINDLER, Jerusalem 1965 (1967), 231–250.

Building Costs

The combined inscriptions of the Three Gauls and the Germanies provide only one straightforward building cost, yet one which is quite staggering in size. This is the 2,000,000 sestertii bequeathed by one C. Iulius Secundus for the erection of an aqueduct at Bordeaux.⁴ The inscription certainly dates from the early imperial period, possibly, as HIRSCHFELD suggests, the reign of Tiberius. The figure easily tops the largest known African building cost, namely the 600,000 sestertii paid for a temple at Lambaesis (DUNCAN-JONES no. 1) and is in fact well in excess of any known African benefaction, the greatest of which being 1,300,000 sestertii paid to float an alimentary scheme (DUNCAN-JONES no. 148). It should also be noted that both African developments are of a second century date and therefore, for a true comparison with Secundus's gift, the sums mentioned should be subject to some reduction to account for inflation in the intervening period.

There is only one other possible direct indication of a Gallic building cost and this relates to the erection of a temple to Mercury at Eburodunum (Yverdun) at the bequest of L. Silanius Candidus.⁵ The estimated cost of the structure was 4,000 sestertii, but in fact a further 1,400 sestertii had to be added by the testator's heir, M. Domitius Magnus, before it could be completed. 5,400 sestertii was obviously a mere fraction of the expenditure involved in the Bordeaux aqueduct, but in itself it is not a ridiculously low figure for the cost of a temple and indeed fits quite respectably into the lower end of the African price-bracket for edifices of this type (cf. DUNCAN-JONES nos. 24a und 25).

Side by side with construction costs Gaul provides some slight, but significant, details as to the sums involved in decorating and embellishing existing structures. If we can restore X C (*milia*) in CIL XIII 5233 then we can see Alpinia Alpinula, and her daughter Peregrina, giving 400,000 sestertii towards the decoration of the temple of Isis built by her husband, L. Annius Magianus, at Aquae Helvetiorum (Baden). In a similar fashion, among the Sequani, we find Flavius Catullus leaving 300,000 sestertii for the marbling of the baths at Epamanduodurum (Mandeure).⁶ Again, such sums stand up well in comparison with the African evidence. Indeed, the expense of merely decorating the Helvetian temple exceeds all but one of the direct building costs known from Africa (DUNCAN-JONES nos. 2–26), while the amount of money involved in decorating the baths at Mandeure was more than the cost of actually erecting two of the three African baths, the financial details of whose construction are known to us (DUNCAN-JONES nos. 29–31).⁷

⁴ CIL XIII 596–600.

⁵ CIL XIII 5056.

⁶ CIL XIII 5416/7 (The alternative to assuming a gift of 75,000 denarii is to suppose that Catullus's bequest amounted to no more than the equivalent of 3 aurei – a sum hardly to be advertised in this way.).

⁷ This latter figure is also comparable to the gift made by the younger Pliny to pay for the decoration of the baths at Como: ILS 2927; cf. DUNCAN-JONES, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 30.

Bricks and mortar do not last for ever and benefactors are found providing for the upkeep of specific properties. The largest such Gallic endowment known (subject again to the restoration of X CCL [*milia*]) is the 1,000,000 sestertii given by Claudius Verinus for the perpetual maintenance of the temple of Mars and the *Genius Talliatium* at Ripsdorf, near Cologne.⁸ This is followed by the 200,000 sestertii provided by L. Ammius Gamburio to pay for the upkeep of the *proscænium* which he dedicated at Bitburg, together with annual festivities; this gift was made in A. D. 198.⁹ Some seventy-four years earlier, also in the territory of the Treveri, M. Victorius Pollentinus built a temple to the goddess Caiva at Junkerath, and endowed it with 100,000 sestertii.¹⁰ The smallest amount recorded in this category is the 4,000 sestertii provided by the Helvetian T. Pomponius . . . to the *vicani* of Minnodunum (Moudon) for the establishment of a fund to pay for the restoration of a temple to Juppiter and an annual three-day feast.¹¹ Thus three of the four known Gallic endowments involve very large sums of money. There are no exact African parallels, but these amounts can perhaps be compared very favourably with DUNCAN-JONES's 'Capital payments to cities' (nos. 321–323a) where the largest known is 200,000 sestertii, for the upkeep of an aqueduct at Sa-braha.

Sportulae

After expenditure related to buildings, their erection, ornamentation and upkeep, the most numerous references to specific amounts of money in the Three Gauls are those concerned with the distribution of *sportulae*. The largest sums known seem to be those given by C. Satrius . . ., *sevir Augustalis* at Lyon, who, on the occasion of his erection of a silver statue of Liberty, distributed *sportulae* of 400 sestertii to the decurions of the colony and of 80 sestertii to his fellow *seviri*.¹² These gifts are unusually generous, and indeed are not wholly certain from the inscription as it stands. However, as WUILLEUMIER has remarked, they are appropriate to the dedication: the statue was of silver and weighed 150 lbs Roman – as large as the largest such piece known from Africa, calculated by DUNCAN-JONES to have been worth in excess of 115,000 sestertii (no. 82). The remaining *sportulae* are much more modest; Sex. Ligurius Marinus, *duovir*-designate at Lyon, handed out amounts of 20, 12 and 8 sestertii to members of the various layers of upper-class society in the city, and the same figures recur elsewhere.¹³ Thus gifts of 20 sestertii were made

⁸ CIL XIII 7777.

⁹ CIL XIII 4132.

¹⁰ CIL XIII 4149.

¹¹ CIL XIII 5043.

¹² ILTG 240.

¹³ CIL XIII 1921.

by C. Apronius Raptor and Sex. Iulius Helvius, both again at Lyon.¹⁴ Sums of 12 sestertii were distributed by C. Iulius Sabinianus and C. Novellius Ianuarius in the same city.¹⁵ Once again the largest Gallic *sportulae* are much larger than the largest known African (DUNCAN-JONES no. 290); and all Gallic gifts fall into the top third of DUNCAN-JONES's African list (nos. 291–295).

Miscellaneous

The evidence for Gallic costs other than building costs and *sportulae* is scanty, but still worthy of interest. For example, the Helvetian *sevir* Q. Aelius Aunus presented the *vicani* of Moudon with 3,000 sestertii, the interest from which was to provide an annual three-day *gymnasium* (which must surely, in the African sense, mean a free distribution of oil) in perpetuity.¹⁶ In similar vein, the Ambarrian M. Rufius Catullus stipulated in his will that meals costing 8 sestertii per head should be held regularly through the year in his memory.¹⁷ A meal of the same price was provided *honoratis praesentibus* by C. Gentius Olillus, twice *magister pagi*, when he made a dedication to Diana at Condate.¹⁸ Rather different from the provision of oil, food and drink, we appear to have the costs of two statues, both presumably of marble, of the goddess Aventia; one was dedicated by T. Tertius Severus, *curator* of Aventicum, at a price of 5,200 sestertii;¹⁹ the other was set up by T. Ianuarius Florinus and P. Domitius Didymus, both also *curatores coloniae*, using an unspecified amount from temple funds but adding 1,500 sestertii from their own pockets.²⁰ Similarly the veteran C. Gentilius Victor left 8,000 sestertii for the setting up of an altar to the safety of the emperor Commodus at Mainz.²¹ All these figures, few as they are, are very comparable to the African evidence. The *gymnasium* fund is admittedly somewhat small against most of those noted by DUNCAN-JONES (no. 250 ff.), but is certainly not among the smallest and must have seemed substantial in a tiny *vicus*. The costs of the two feasts fit in well with the *sportulae* outlined above; and the statues of Aventia fall well within the middle range of corresponding African prices (DUNCAN-JONES no. 140 ff.). Finally the cost of the Mainz altar is far in excess of its most expensive known African counterpart, dedicated for 1,000 sestertii (DUNCAN-JONES no. 245).

¹⁴ CIL XIII 1911; ILTG 239 (in A. D. 173).

¹⁵ CIL XIII 2002; 2020.

¹⁶ CIL XIII 5042.

¹⁷ CIL XIII 2494; J.-J. HATT, *La tombe gallo-romaine*, Paris 1951, 71, says 48 sestertii, which must be wrong.

¹⁸ CIL XIII 1670.

¹⁹ CIL XIII 5072.

²⁰ CIL XIII 5073.

²¹ CIL XIII 6677.

Impressions formed from direct comparison of African and Gallic gifts and endowments are susceptible to confirmation by a more indirect method. Side by side with records of specific costs of benefactions, the Gallic inscriptions reveal a much larger number of uncosted acts of generosity, or self-advertisement, on the part of the leading men of the three provinces. Too numerous, and often too vague, to be listed *in toto*, certain of them nonetheless deserve attention as further indicators of the wealth of the indigenous aristocracy.

In A. D. 19, for example, at about the same time as C. Iulius Secundus was providing for his aqueduct at Bordeaux, C. Iulius Rufus, *sacerdos Romae et Augusti, praefectus fabrum*, completed a monumental arch at Saintes and became involved, in part or whole, in the construction of an amphitheatre at the federal Altar at Condate.²² Neither building would have been cheap; the median cost of an arch in Africa (at mainly second and early-third century prices) was 46,300 sesterterii (DUNCAN-JONES nos. 32–37a); and as for the building of an amphitheatre, there are no African parallels, presumably because the expense involved made such a project beyond the reach of the private individual.²³ Yet Gaul provides a further example of the private erection of such a structure, among the Petrucorii, through the bequest of A. Pompeius Dumnom(otulus?).²⁴ Gallic munificence in public buildings in fact extended to another arch, theatres and baths-buildings, all known from the African material to be highly expensive undertakings.²⁵

As in Africa, so in the Three Gauls, the commonest recorded form of building erected out of a private gift or bequest is the temple. The African evidence, however, reveals a great variation between the upper and lower limits of known costs, from 600,000 sesterterii down to as low as 3,000 (DUNCAN-JONES nos. 1–26). Uncosted Gallic inscriptions, therefore, can tell us little in detail of the wealth involved. However, we are fortunate in having at least one temple dedication found *in situ*, and in an archaeological context indicating the expenditure of great wealth. The temple in question was found at Yzeures (Indre-et-Loire), and was dedicated by one M. Petronius . . . , following the wishes of his father.²⁶

Yet of all the specifically ‘uncosted’ Gallic inscriptions probably the most important is the so-called ‘Thorigny marble’, because it shows individual Gallic wealth extending into the first half of the third century A. D., and existing in an area not normally considered to be the heartland of the Three Gauls.²⁷ During the third decade of the third century T. Sennius Sollemnus, a leading noble among the Viducasses, provided elaborate festivities for his fellow-tribesmen at their chief

²² CIL XIII 1036; ILTG 217.

²³ DUNCAN-JONES, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 75.

²⁴ CIL XIII 11045.

²⁵ CIL XIII 5688; 1642, 2462, 3024, 3450, 5614; 939, 1376/7.

²⁶ E. ESPÉRANDIEU & R. LANTIER, *Recueil des bas-reliefs, statues et bustes de la Gaule romaine*, Paris 1907–1949, iv, 126 and no. 2996.

²⁷ CIL XIII 3162, with H.-G. PFLAUM, *Le marbre de Thorigny*, Paris 1948.

town to celebrate his becoming *sacerdos* at the Altar and the Temple at the Confluence. Included in the events were thirty-two gladiatorial bouts, eight to the death. PFLAUM has calculated that the minimum cost of this spree, at *mid-second* century prices, must have been in the region of 332,000 sesterii.²⁸ Such an outlay could have formed only a fraction of the expenditure expected of Sollemnis as chief priest, and indeed he occurs elsewhere on the inscription as a generous public benefactor to his people, completing and endowing the baths-building promised by his father. The man must have possessed enormous wealth.

As I emphasised at the beginning, the facts and figures quoted in the foregoing must be treated with great care, and certainly do not permit the formulation of any sweeping <conclusions>, for example as to the relative prosperity of the Gallic and African economies. From the point of view of my own particular interests, however, I find them significant as evidence for the presence of some very rich men in the Three Gauls under the Early Empire. Communal wealth can be misleading: the combined resources of the poorest communities can often allow the expenditure of very large amounts of money – as the incomes of various eastern religious leaders demonstrate even today. For this reason I have ignored such extravagances as the gold *torques* presented to Claudius, and the Arvernian statue of Mercury.²⁹ Yet the gifts and bequests described above hint that Gallia Comata, from the first to the third centuries A. D., contained a number of men whose private capital lay within, or within striking distance of, the formal cash qualifications laid down for entry into the equestrian order, or even the Senate.³⁰ The same, of course, holds true for Africa, but while Africa produced her quota of leading imperial administrators Gaul did not. This notorious absence, so often commented up, cannot apparently be ascribed to <poverty>.*

²⁸ PFLAUM, *op. cit.* (n. 27), 14 ff. (using the *s.c. de sumptibus ludorum gladiatoriorum minuendis* of A. D. 176/7: CIL II 6278 = ILS 5163). PFLAUM's total compares well with the sum of 200,000 sesterii spent on a four-day show at Carthage in the early second century (DUNCAN-JONES no. 281).

²⁹ Pliny the Elder, NH 33, 54; 24, 45.

³⁰ 400,000 and 1,200,000 sesterii respectively; T. Sennius Sollemnis certainly hovered on the brink of an equestrian career; the Burdigalan C. Iulius Secundus had money enough to be a senator, and his generosity was on the scale of the younger Pliny.

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