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Migration and Its Impacts on the Labor Market of Rome during the Late Republic and Early Empire

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CLAS 399

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Introduction

Studying Migration in Ancient Rome Using an Economic Model

For a city as large and influential as ancient Rome, its growth relied on a number of factors: military power, internal leadership, international trade, consumer goods markets, agricultural development, the labor force, and slavery. What allowed for growth in these areas was a certain combination of technological and cultural advancements, but what drove growth on such a scale at Rome was the sheer number of people found there.¹ From the increases in wealth due to war, especially the Punic Wars, and the increases in the volume of slaves brought to and sold in Rome, the economy was flooded with capital, land, and labor, which helped the upper and lower (working) classes develop and improve their operations.² However, during this time of economic change, and great political change too, the social structure remained stable through the Late Republic to the Early Empire, about 250 BC to AD 30.³ This stability means there was consistency in social status and the perceptions of status for the upper and lower class, for citizens and foreigners, and for workers and slaves.⁴ Although social status indicated one's "place" in the social hierarchy, the ability to relocate to rural or urban areas would have been an option for most people regardless of status, and cities such as Rome hosted quite a number of migrants due to its alluring opportunities.⁵ These migrants, whether voluntary or forced, and their impact on the labor market of Rome are the focus of this paper.

¹ Scheidel 2004:1.

² Hopkins 1978:104-5. Scheidel (2007:322) discusses how money flowing from the upper class reached the lower class and increased its average wealth.

³ Joshel 2010:32, 48.

⁴ Jongman (2004:104-5) talks about how the inequality between social groups, especially in wealth, grew rapidly during this period, but the social structures themselves remained in place.

⁵ Erdkamp 2008:420-1.

I am examining what benefits these migrants gained from moving to Rome as well as what their overall impact was on the residents of the city and the labor market. To assess the impacts from an economic perspective, I compare different workers and their attributes in a theoretical model to illustrate how they impacted each other's employment opportunities and wages. What complicates this analysis is the prevalence of slave labor in Roman society, which was used for almost any type of work, but did not have a daily wage rate, as non-slave workers did. However, slaves can still be taken into account in the model and, in fact, they are the best documented form of labor, often recorded in different types of ancient evidence. A paper of this scope requires a systematic methodology in order to confirm a complex argument supported by an economic analysis of labor market outcomes using the supply-demand model of immigration. That methodology is set out below.

This work relies first on an assessment of the labor market conditions as they were in the Late Republic and Early Empire, or as they can be recreated. As such, my first chapter surveys three major areas: the types of workers, the work they did around the city, and the kinds of employers. I distinguish between three main classifications of workers, namely slaves, skilled, and unskilled workers; I also identify the possible characteristics for them such as immigrant, temporary migrant, locals, freedmen, and local migrants.⁶ Citizenship status also plays a role here, especially in how people viewed each other and foreigners. For employment, I consider daily workers, seasonal workers, farmers, household slaves, public slaves, construction workers, dock and port workers, those who transported goods, and miners. I use literary evidence about how slave labor was utilized in a variety of settings and about the patron-client relationship. I also use archeological evidence from epigraphs, ruins of villages, and factories. The kinds of

⁶ Freedmen in particular represented a combination of these categories. As former slaves, they were often foreigners and after manumission, they entered the free urban skilled worker group. Often freedmen would also be given citizenship, and they were able to get married. See Joshel (2010:42-3).

employers can be seen through this as well, such as the elites of the upper class, sub-elites, farm operators, business owners, craftsmen, government, and the military. Chapter one finishes with a brief commentary on the impact of social status on peoples' perceptions of others. Major findings of this chapter highlight the variety of work and the nuances among the different workers and employers. Additionally, in the skilled labor group, freed people had the most potential for advancement at manumission and afterward in their industry and in their social strata.

In the second chapter, I take a closer look at the background, function, and social standing of immigrants at Rome. I focus specifically on immigrants' characteristics and experiences that may have brought them to Rome, as well as what they experience there as far as employment and living conditions. After defining and describing immigration in Rome, I turn to the demand for forced and voluntary migrants and discuss each group's function in Rome – who they support economically, what regions they come from, and how many come on an annual basis. Important results in this chapter indicate that while slaves were brought to Rome in large quantities, skilled and unskilled migrants also provided essential support to employers with increasing need for workers, in addition to sustaining the (free) population of the city.

My third chapter introduces the supply-demand migration model that analyzes the impact of immigrants on the supply and demand for labor. The chapter begins by explaining why the Roman labor market can be studied and analyzed in terms of economic principles. Then, I discuss the components of the migration model and its assumptions, and I suggest ways to work with the assumptions for Rome specifically. Finally, I apply the model and observe the outcomes at the aggregate level for the market and also by skill level. My purpose for applying this economic model is to compare the effects of immigration on labor supplied and demanded, wage

rates, and the number of people employed at each skill level as more slaves are utilized and free labor competes for the remaining jobs. The implication found is that non-slave unskilled workers experienced lower wage rates and increased competition as migrants entered the market, while slaves had consistent employment and learned new skills. On the other hand, skilled workers were in greater demand and had increased wages, and slaves who became freedmen experienced similar outcomes as skilled workers.

As a result, we see how unskilled migrants and workers faced many challenges on a daily basis in the Roman labor market, while slaves did not. In fact, slaves had a consistent source of work and had incentives to be highly productive, such as job independence and manumission, and they had living arrangements provided. Moreover, slaves once freed had even better economic benefits in job stability and advancement than unskilled workers, in addition to having income for buying goods and providing for a family. Although slaves' condition of servitude made them worse off than any other social group, certain long term benefits put them in a better economic position than unskilled workers, such as learning skills, having a patron to provide work or recommend them, and having the potential for job advancement. As freedmen, the former slaves were then on par socially and economically with other free skilled workers and managers.

There are a few general issues to address before beginning my study. As alluded to at the start of this introduction, the Late Republic and Early Imperial periods saw substantial economic growth corresponding with the reach and expanding power of the Roman Empire. Immigration of slaves into Rome was a direct result of this expansion, but immigration of free people to Rome occurred simultaneously and could have been a direct or indirect cause of Rome's expansion.⁷ The volume of slaves brought to Rome per year grew moderately over time through the Late

⁷ Scheidel 2005:64.

Republic, but in the Early Empire it decreased to a certain level and hovered there.⁸ This trend is roughly documented by primary sources and supported by scholarly population projections and estimated urban and rural growth rates. The greatest issue is that there are scarcely any reliable population counts in primary sources (such as in Livy's *Historiae* or Augustus' *Res Gestae*), and the scholarly debate is extensive concerning how to best estimate the population based on what evidence remains intact and plausible.⁹ Due to the limited data, these population estimates either from primary source counts or scholars' reconstructions certainly do not break down the population into categories by social standing and labor type. There are different high and low count estimates for the Roman Italian population, but the generally accepted population of Rome itself is estimated to have been at most around one million, especially toward the end of the Republic.¹⁰ My intent is to give the relative importance of each working group in Rome based on the above scholars' work, where appropriate.

Literary and archeological evidence is also limited regarding how the labor market and slave labor distribution operated. The literature passes down fragmentary pieces of accounts about how exchanges of labor for wages occurred or how slaves should be used. However, these sources rarely are representative of the whole picture, resulting in incomplete images of how the free labor system worked. A majority of the information that has survived is anecdotal evidence from authors who, while writing on a different theme, touch on a simple aspect of labor or how it affected their life. Some examples include passages in Seneca, Livy, the *Digest*, Plutarch, Appian, Cato, Varro, and Tertullian.¹¹ Likewise, archeological evidence in the form of tombs,

⁸ Bradley 1994:32 and Killgrove 2010:31.

⁹ See Scheidel (2004:2-3) and (2008:18-21) as well as Holleran (2011:156-7).

¹⁰ Scheidel (2008:22-23) discusses the high and low count arguments. Holleran (2011:156-8), Morley (1996:44), and Noy (2000:19) support the estimate of 1 million inhabitants in Rome around the time of Augustus' rule.

¹¹ Seneca (*ad Helviam* 6.2-4) and Livy (39.3.4-6, 41.7.6-8) as cited in Bradley (1994:61). Bradley briefly comments on the issue of anecdotal primary evidence about labor and how it affects our understanding.

inscriptions, and worksites provide us with data regarding individual people and sites, but general conclusions about the evidence are hard to extrapolate. Especially for epigraphs and other forms of commemoration, there is an element of selectivity and luck as to who gets inscribed and which inscriptions we find intact at sites.¹² The surviving examples give important information regarding specific individuals and their circumstances at their death, but the limited sample size requires using the data to draw broad generalizations. Keeping the concern with representative evidence in mind, my study will incorporate the literary and archeological evidence where appropriate and will refrain from overgeneralizing the evidence.

In sum, this paper presents an examination of migration to Rome during the Late Republic and Early Empire and its effects on labor market outcomes for migrants, as well as all other types of workers. I begin by outlining the working population: who works, what characteristics they have, what work they do, and who the main employers are. Next, I look closely at immigration, both forced and voluntary. Lastly, I apply an economic model of immigration that analyzes the effects on the supply and demand for labor as well as on wages for each group. I find that slaves may have had a better position in the market than unskilled migrants since they were given housing and work, and that freed persons were equal to free skilled persons in job advancement and citizenship after manumission. This finding forms the support for my argument that slaves experienced better labor market outcomes than unskilled workers and migrants at all times, and in the long run, slaves turned into freedmen enjoyed a favorable economic standing and improved social standing as well. While slaves and any slaves lucky enough to be freed experienced some benefits over their lifetime, one must also remember that slaves were denied freedom and the right to have a family, not all slaves could expect

¹² Treggiari (1975:57) discusses some of the issues and concerns with interpreting the sample from Livia's slaves' columbarium.

manumission as a possibility, and only a fraction of eligible slaves would actually be manumitted.

Chapter 1

Assessing the Characteristics of the Labor Market in Rome

To begin such a study of labor economics, the best method is to start by describing the labor market in Rome as it was and as we can understand it from literary and historical evidence. Then, it can proceed by identifying the people likely to move to Rome, as well as what characteristics they shared and what they contributed to society, as the next chapter does. Overall, this first chapter covers the different segments of the labor market with specific attention to the types of workers and their employers. The prevalence of each is estimated relative to their importance in the economy, and a brief commentary is included throughout on social status and how each status was perceived by others. One consideration to keep in mind is that most scholars' knowledge on this topic depends on scattered literary and archeological evidence. My aim is to compile information on all of the plausible findings, estimates, and assumptions that contribute to the general understanding of how the labor market operated and what nuances may have existed within it.

The Types of Workers

In any labor market, there are different strata of workers who contribute to the production of even just one output, and there is a certain degree of specialization that distinguishes the workers of one stratum from another. In the Roman labor market, these strata of workers can be broken into slaves, skilled workers, and unskilled workers, as well as into secondary categories like immigrant, freedman, soldier, native, or local migrant. Slaves are permanent workers, and most begin under a master as relatively unskilled until they learn specific tasks and roles in

places like an urban house, villa, or farming estate. They give their working life to their master along with any children they have, but there is the possibility of being freed later in life, depending on several factors.¹³ Skilled and unskilled workers find work on their own and depend on that work as a source of income for themselves or their household. Immigrants to a city like Rome can be forced to move as slaves or can move voluntarily to live and/or work there, even if for just a season or short period. Soldiers drafted from Italy can either go to a city for work or return home, presumably to a farm. Many soldiers from other territories would have tried to find work in a city like Rome in the off period in winter, or they could return home when discharged.¹⁴ Natives are the people who live and work in the same geographic area, while local migrants have a home in one area but work or travel to complete their work in a different area, such as merchants, farmers selling excess food, or transportation workers. While this listing is by no means exhaustive, it gives a general description of the likely types and characteristics of working people to be found in Rome.

Workers in this context mean those in the “lower class” who labor to produce some output for an employer or government entity or who work to sustain themselves or their family by earning profits from selling goods or services. They are distinct from the “upper class” who sustain an elite way of life by owning or operating source(s) of profit and who often also participate in politics.¹⁵ In Roman society, status distinctions separated the population sharply into categories based on one’s legal, political, and social position. Legal status was the simplest since it depended on whether a person was a citizen or not, and it was unique because someone

¹³ Joshel 2010:40.

¹⁴ Noy (2000:20) discusses the size of the military presence in Rome and describes what would make soldiers want to stay in Rome or leave.

¹⁵ Killgrove (2010:12-13) discusses this dichotomy in Roman society and includes a helpful graphic that depicts the social structure as a pyramid with the upper class at the top separated from the lower class at the bottom. While Killgrove uses it to show the breakdown within Imperial Rome as a whole, I apply it similarly to the Late Republic in Rome and assume the general pattern holds for the rest of the empire.

could gain or lose citizenship in a variety of ways.¹⁶ Political and social status, however, took into account citizenship, government participation, wealth, and occupation. In the political realm, only male citizens were allowed to participate fully if they met the minimum wealth requirement, and these men were called patricians.¹⁷ Within this group were the senators, equestrians, and decurions who were typically free, wealthy citizens, but there is evidence that freedmen could reach equestrian status.¹⁸ Overall, this group is characterized by having the wealth and influence in a city especially in politics, being affiliated with the first group in the phrase “the Senate and the Roman People.”¹⁹ On the other hand, the People were the plebeians who included all other free (male) citizens lacking the necessary wealth to be in government.²⁰ The plebs, as they are often called, could move upward in political status by exceptional service and leadership in the army, and freed slaves who became civil servants were in this group.²¹ Legal and political status were interrelated, and together they determined the relative value one had in society, with the ideal and most desirable position being a wealthy citizen.

The third status distinction, social status, takes into account both legal and political status in its categories, but it reaches out more broadly to include all other people in society too, namely women, children, slaves, and non-citizen foreigners. Social status for Romans at the time was a dichotomy, consisting of the upper class and lower class. The elites in the upper class consisted of senators and equestrians (i.e. the patricians) and other rich nobles (e.g. descendants

¹⁶ Treggiari 1996:874-5. Treggiari also mentions some of the ways that people can move from citizen to non-citizen, such as slaves who became freedmen with citizenship or citizens who were captured as prisoners of war and then sold into slavery.

¹⁷ Treggiari 1996:875, 878.

¹⁸ Treggiari 1996:875-7; Saller 2000:831-2. Treggiari (1996:880) mentions the imperial freedman Narcissus, M. Antonius Pallas, and M. Aurelius Zosimus who were freedmen of equestrian status or freedmen of enough wealth to be equestrians.

¹⁹ Treggiari 1996:875.

²⁰ Treggiari 1996:875.

²¹ Treggiari 1996:877. Saller (2000:834-8) discusses how social mobility was possible for migrants, freedmen, slaves, soldiers, and aristocrats.

of patricians), and this group is known for having citizens with their whole families who had money and influence from their economic and political status.²² The lower class, then, included everyone else: citizens (i.e. the plebeians) and non-citizens alike, ranging from Italian natives to freedmen to immigrants and slaves. This is also related to economic status, such that the lower class consisted of working class people and their families who supplied the labor or manpower for production in urban and rural areas. On the other end of economic status was the upper class who provided the money and strategic management for that production.²³ The distinction between these two classes is quite pronounced, and it is highly unlikely (but not impossible) for anyone below the upper class to earn enough money and influence to be accepted into that elite society.²⁴ However, there most likely was a sub-elite group of people who had the greatest wealth and power within the lower class and so stood out from the “average” lower class person who made ends meet but had little wealth leftover.²⁵ Within the sub-elite there were professionals, doctors, teachers, some artisans and craftsmen, lawyers, writers, and artists. Generally, social status categorized all men, women, slaves, immigrants, and non-citizens by a combination of wealth, citizenship, and economic status into an upper or lower social group, but there was an unofficial middle group of sub-elites.

One scholar, based on the calculations of several scholars, has put together an estimate for the distribution of each social class: a little less than 2% of the population was in the upper class and the remaining 98% in the lower class. Looking within the latter, 58% were free

²² Treggiari (1996:881) describes how senators are promoted from equestrians and nobles from equestrians, while men with no political background had to prove themselves. She also emphasizes how friendship and patronage connected peoples within the same social class (e.g. senators, equestrians, and nobles) and with those below them (e.g. civil servants, freed slaves, and plebs) (1996:882).

²³ Saller (2000:825-6) alludes to this distinction between the labor provided and the owners of capital.

²⁴ Treggiari gives examples of how men could rise through the ranks of the army to reach an equestrian administrative post (1996:877, 881).

²⁵ Treggiari (1996:880) mentions how people with skills, like craftsmen, shopkeepers, and freedmen, often differentiated themselves from people below them by using their money to buy tomb inscriptions.

commoners, 35% slaves, and 6% freed people (*liberti*).²⁶ The upper class prized itself as a citizen only group, while the lower class had a mix of both.²⁷ Slaves and freedmen were not considered citizens unless formally manumitted by a citizen, but the children of freedmen were full citizens. The plebs contained toga-wearing citizens, other residents of Italy who were non-citizens until granted full citizenship by law in 89 BC, and freeborn foreigners living in Roman territories. The *peregrini* (foreigners) were non-citizens unless they made a significant contribution to society or, more commonly, bribed an official.²⁸ In general, *peregrini* were tolerated and could live alongside citizens, but they had little legal protection and lived with the fear of expulsion for committing crimes or pretending to be citizens.²⁹

How citizens viewed *peregrini* differed depending on what literary source one reads, but negative views seem more pronounced or, at least, more likely to be recorded. On one hand, foreign slaves could not be separated from their nationality since that was a signaling characteristic for buyers as to the basic quality or aptitude of a slave for a certain kind of work. Gauls and Spaniards came to Rome as slaves and later as free migrants, and in the first and second centuries AD were often recruited for the military.³⁰ Germans were useful for farm work and also as bodyguards; Greeks were craftsmen and tended to be more intellectual than warlike.³¹ On the other hand, in the literature, some authors who are not themselves natives or immigrants to Rome, such as Athenaeus and Aelius Aristides, praise it as an incredible city that

²⁶ See Killgrove 2010:14 Table 2.1. While these estimates are informative, they are a general snapshot of the breakout of the population, meaning that they may not accurately reflect a specific point in time but rather a plausible indication of the underlying population.

²⁷ Treggiari 1996:881-2.

²⁸ Noy 2000:24-5. Foreigners were typically non-citizens until they were all given citizenship after the Constitutio Antoniniana of AD 212.

²⁹ Noy 2000:24.

³⁰ Noy 2000:205-6.

³¹ Noy 2000:213, 225.

attracts various peoples, especially intellectuals as Strabo mentions.³² There are accounts of authors' neutrality toward foreigners, such as Q. Cicero's comment on the multiple nationalities found in the city.

*Tertium restat: "Roma est," civitas ex nationum conventu constituta, in qua multae insidiae, multa fallacia, multa in omni genere vitia versantur, multorum adrogantia, multorum contumacia, multorum malevolentia, multorum superbia, multorum odium ac molestia perferenda est. video esse magni consili atque artis in tot hominum cuiusque modi vitiis tantisque versantem vitare offensionem, vitare fabulam, vitare insidias, esse unum hominem accommodatum ad tantam morum ac sermonum ac voluntatum varietatem. (Q. Cic. Pet. 54)*³³

There remains a third [reflection to keep in mind every day], "This is Rome," a city made up of a combination of nations, in which many snares, much deception, many vices enter into every department of life: in which you have to put up with the arrogant pretensions, the wrong-headedness, the ill-will, the hauteur, the disagreeable temper and offensive manners of many. I well understand that it requires great prudence and skill for a man, living among social vices of every sort, so many and so serious, to avoid giving offence, causing scandal, or falling into traps, and in his single person to adapt himself to such a vast variety of character, speech, and feeling.³⁴

Seneca, too, explains how many different peoples have left their homes and flocked to Rome.

*"Carere patria intolerabile est." Aspice aegedum hanc frequentiam, cui vix urbis immensae tecta sufficiunt: maxima pars istius turbae patria caret. Ex municipiis et coloniis suis, ex toto denique orbe terrarum confluerunt... Nullum non hominum genus concucurrit in urbem et virtutibus et vitiis magna pretia ponentem. Iube istos omnes ad nomen citari et "unde domo" quisque sit quaere. Videbis maiorem partem esse quae relictis sedibus suis venerit in maximam quidem ac pulcherrimam urbem, non tamen suam. (Sen. ad Helviam 6.2-3)*³⁵

³² As cited in Noy (2000:31-2). Noy also discusses how a citizen of provincial origins active in politics might have wanted to downplay his ties to his home outside of Rome.

³³ Q. Tullius Cicero. *Essay on Running for Consul*. L. C. Purser, Ed. Available on Perseus.Tufts.edu.

³⁴ M. Tullius Cicero. *The Letters of Cicero: The Whole Extant Correspondence in Chronological Order, in Four Volumes*. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh, trans. London: George Bell and Sons, 1908-1909. Volume II, Appendix A: *De Petitione Consulatus*.

³⁵ Lucius Annasus Seneca. *Moral Essays: Volume II*. John W. Basore, trans. *The Loeb Classical Library*. London: Harvard University Press, 1932.

“To be deprived of one's country is intolerable,” you say. But come now, behold this concourse of men, for whom the houses of huge Rome scarcely suffice; most of this throng are now deprived of their country. From their towns and colonies, from the whole world, in fact, hither have they flocked... Every class of person has swarmed into the city that offers high prizes for both virtues and vices. Have all of them summoned by name and ask of each "Whence do you hail?" You will find that there are more than half who have left their homes and come to this city, which is truly a very great and a very beautiful one, but not their own.³⁶

However, the negative accounts about *peregrini* complain about too many Greeks, Italian fields full of slaves, Rome as a sewer collecting scum from all over, slave households resembling whole nations, and the difficulty of distinguishing slaves from free foreigners. These authors, including Juvenal, Lucan, Tacitus, Lucian, Appian, Sallust, and Ammianus, mix xenophobia with class prejudice at times since few are concerned with free immigrants.³⁷ Several of these authors are immigrants themselves, which makes us wonder how they distinguish between good or bad types of immigrants.

Concerning the experiences of people in the lower class then, unskilled workers were typically free native or immigrant urban workers, the least prosperous of which probably came close to being among the urban poor. Slaves were typically foreigners and so stood out from others. Immigrants could also be non-citizen foreigners, so they likely joined the unskilled population. Children of freedman still carried a part of the association with slavery, although they could have opportunities to build their own success through their father's business (that might have previously been the master's business).³⁸ Artisans and craftsmen inherently imply skilled (or perhaps only semi-skilled) labor, and they had or could join an established market for specialty goods. Moreover, they may have had more stability than the unskilled workers because

³⁶ Lucius Annasus Seneca. *Moral Essays: Volume II*. John W. Basore, trans. *The Loeb Classical Library*. London: Harvard University Press, 1932.

³⁷ Noy (2000:34-5) cites and discusses fragments that mention foreigners for each of these authors. Similarly, see Holleran (2011:159) who cites Sallust and Lucan.

³⁸ Joshel 2010:42-3, 46.

they had a relatively fixed source of employment. Immigrants could also be in this group, but it was probably harder for them to prove their quality or expertise without a letter of recommendation or something similar. Soldiers drifted in and out of the urban labor market depending on their deployment periods and their tendency to return to a home outside of the city, but they could do daily labor or artisan work if they had previous experience. In any case, they were also good for manual labor, transporting loads, and construction work.

Types of Employment

The preceding explanation of the various characteristics of workers helps in understanding their selection or preference for work in the city or surrounding countryside in accordance with their skill level and social standing per se. While the Italian countryside hosted more of the agricultural work, the *suburbium* around Rome certainly still had some livestock and farming for personal and local consumption. The workers on such farms or estates would have included some mix of slaves and natives who were mobile during the off-season.³⁹ For a growing city like Rome though, many workers were needed in the city itself for a variety of purposes like trading, transportation, and construction in addition to the usual household functioning and patron-client relationships. For unskilled workers whether natives, migrants, or seasonal migrants around the city, daily or contract labor would be a probable source, earning them the name of *mercannarii*.⁴⁰ The length of the contract may vary according to the employer's need, whether he needed an item or person transported to another place, just a single day's work, which would be a more informal agreement, or several month's work, which might entail a formal contract describing the length, pay, benefits, if any, and punishment for non-

³⁹ Holleran 2011:172.

⁴⁰ Treggiari 1980:50-1.

compliance.⁴¹ In any case, these workers depended on employers to regularly hire out labor for general tasks and especially for dangerous tasks that slaves would not be made to do.⁴²

Sometimes the *mercennarii* could live in the house of their employer, but certainly at least they were there often.⁴³ This relationship resembled a slave and master to many scholars, since the worker's freedom was reduced, but there is little evidence in literature or legal documents to support this as a predominant view for Romans.⁴⁴

Additional needs for unskilled workers included trade and transportation laborers, such as for ports and docks requiring maintenance, for loading and unloading goods from ships, or moving goods to and from Ostia, Rome, and elsewhere along the Tiber.⁴⁵ There were also a number of projects and demands funded indirectly by the empire, such as grain, oil, and meat distribution and the construction of aqueducts, *thermae*, temples, palaces, and monuments.⁴⁶ Certainly repairs to such buildings and to the infrastructure in and around the city, especially roads, required many workers to complete. While free persons were easily recruited labor for these types of jobs, we cannot rule out the use of slave labor alongside free laborers.⁴⁷ The other major need for unskilled labor was domestic production that utilized slaves for simple cooking, cleaning, grooming, and maintenance, and, even beyond that, for producing goods, physical labor, financial work, or administrative tasks. Depending on the size of the house, villa, or estate,

⁴¹ Treggiari 1980:51; Holleran 2011:169.

⁴² Treggiari 1980:52; Holleran 2011:169, 172.

⁴³ Treggiari 1980:50.

⁴⁴ Treggiari 1980:52.

⁴⁵ Holleran 2011:170. Another point Holleran mentions is how transportation on land into the city would have had to take place at night too, since wheeled vehicles were not allowed in during the day, or else more people were required for the daytime shift.

⁴⁶ Edwards and Woolf 2003:12; Holleran 2011:170-2.

⁴⁷ Bradley 1994:65. See also Holleran (2011:171-2) for consideration of this point.

the number of slaves needed would vary, but their general purpose was assisting the master or mistress with daily tasks while eliminating the need for hired labor.⁴⁸

A major source for historical information about slaves and their roles in a household comes from first century columbaria found around Rome that were populated with staff members of families in the upper class. These columbaria are representative of groups of slaves who could come together and maintain the burial places with persons of the same household or the servants of close friends or relatives of that household. One example of a columbarium that is well documented is the *Monumentum Liviae* along the Via Appia, which contained only the urban staff of Augustus' widow, Livia, as well as some servants of her husband, son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren.⁴⁹ Livia had two *dispensatores* (stewards) under her who would manage domestic affairs generally; this included instructing the slaves about food prep, cleaning, and other daily tasks, but more importantly dealing with money and financial activity with the help of one *tabularius* (accountant) and three *arcarii* (keepers of the chest).⁵⁰ It seems likely that all these posts were held by slaves; yet the stewards who had a higher status and some personal wealth could expect manumission, while the others were freed upon retirement from the job.⁵¹ Several additional *tabularii* specialized in dealing with Livia's possessions and her inheritance, and there were slave *insularii*, who managed apartment blocks and collected rent.⁵² In secretary positions, Livia had one clerk as well as two slaves and one freedman who took dictations.⁵³

Among the domestic staff there were: *atrienses* (slaves for cleaning and maintenance), *ostiarum* (doorkeepers), *tricliniarum* (dining room servants) and *structores* (food carvers),

⁴⁸ Holleran (2011:167) discusses the ideal home as self-sufficient, with no outsiders hired as laborers.

⁴⁹ Treggiari 1975:48.

⁵⁰ Treggiari 1975:49-50.

⁵¹ Treggiari 1975:50.

⁵² Treggiari 1975:50.

⁵³ Treggiari 1975:50-1.

waiters, receptionists and a *nomenclator* (name caller), *rogatores* (sender of invitations), those in charge of guests and their accommodations, *cubicularii* (bedroom servants) who acted as guards, *ornatrices* (dressers), a nail and hair cutter, those dealing with clothes (*ad vestem, ad ornamentis, ad ornamentis sacerdotalibus, vestipicae* or *capsarii*, and *a purpuris*), an *unctrix* (masseur), *pedisequi* (footmen) and their *puer a pedibus* (supervisor), and *delicia* (usually the children of current slaves).⁵⁴ Additionally, there were craftsmen who she may have borrowed from her relatives' households for specialty food preparation, clothes making, shoe making, maintenance and improvements, gold and silversmiths, furniture polishers, and other various specialties.⁵⁵ Other staff included surveyors, gardeners, groomsmen, doctors for Livia and her slaves, and teachers for her grandchildren, extended family, and possibly her slaves' children.⁵⁶ Of the job inscriptions for the staff in Livia's columbarium, there are forty-six different titles; many titles had multiple associated persons, but they may have served at different points in her life.⁵⁷ While the seventy nine members explicitly named as Livia's do not make up a complete list by any means, we get a sense of the variety of jobs, legal status at the time of death, and a low estimate of the number of slaves needed over the course of a lifetime; however, this sample is only representative of the high end of upper class living.⁵⁸

Aside from unskilled workers and slaves, another segment of the labor market is skilled workers who were more likely employed by a business or ran a business that required some skilled and unskilled labor for production. These skilled workers tended to be artisans and

⁵⁴ Treggiari 1975:51-4.

⁵⁵ Treggiari 1975:54-5.

⁵⁶ Treggiari 1975:55-7.

⁵⁷ Treggiari 1975:57. Along with this point, Treggiari also discusses the limited scope of this sample of Livia's staff, the lack of job titles and associations with Livia for many found in the columbarium, and the ways in which it is under-representative of poorer slaves and slaves with lesser or extremely high jobs.

⁵⁸ Treggiari 1975:60. See also Bradley (1994:61-4) who discusses Livia's columbarium generally, but also touches on the limitations of the sample and how this sample compares to that of other imperial families in the Judo-Claudian era and of literary examples of domestic slaves in households.

craftsmen that made and sold particular products or services with the help of employees, an apprentice, or even just their household.⁵⁹ They can also be patrons who hire out laborers for particular tasks, which contribute to their own business or general profitability. More intellectual or educated workers can be hired as doctors, teachers, assistants, authors, or architects, and they would resemble “salaried” workers in the modern sense.⁶⁰ As a freedman or freedwoman, these workers would move into the skilled labor category since they have experience and a reference to support them. While they might be able seek a new job elsewhere, it was more common for them to remain in the same position at their former master’s household or business, take over the management or execution of that same business, or be set up with their own business with the help of their former master.⁶¹ The last two seem more likely for slaves of members of the upper class or of patrons who were craftsmen and/or business owners. The independence that freedmen gained in carrying out the business probably depended on the trust of their former master.⁶²

Examples of documented urban workers in particular are *opifices* (craftsmen of a trade or skill), which may overlap with *artifices*, and *tabernarii* (shopkeepers). Both occupations can be arranged in a few different ways, as one scholar describes: as “(a) his/her own boss; (b) the agent (*institor*) of someone who is not in the trade (and who may be ‘upper-class’); (c) the agent of someone in the trade; (d) a mere assistant (slave, freedman or, perhaps rarely, freeborn *mercannarius*).”⁶³ The agent may also be a slave, freedman, or free person, but his distinctive role was to be in charge of a business or a part of it. His jobs could range from coordinating

⁵⁹ Holleran (2011:167) describes how production of goods in small *tabernae* was for local consumption and required skilled workers.

⁶⁰ Treggiari 1980:52.

⁶¹ Treggiari 1980:54; Holleran 2011:168. Bradley (1994:68-70, 76) gives examples from literature (e.g. Contumella, Timagenes of Alexandria, Artemidorus, and Marcian, Paul, and Papinian in the *Digest*) and inscriptions about slaves being promoted from lower positions and later after manumission.

⁶² Treggiari 1980:54. Bradley (1994:75) discusses generally how much slaves were involved in everyday business and how they could hold managerial positions in the business acting on behalf of their master. These businesses could be run by members of the upper class as well as by craftsmen or artisans.

⁶³ Treggiari 1980:52-3.

loans or overseeing an apartment building to assisting a clothing shop, linen seller, fuller, tailor, undertaker, baker, merchant, pottery maker, or stable hand.⁶⁴ Regardless of the possible arrangements, the inscriptions we find of shopkeepers and craftsmen were presumably well off and proud of their work; they likely reflect the more successful, wealthy, or well known members of the skilled workers group.⁶⁵ However, the group as a whole could include individuals who had little capital or training and could operate from just about any street corner, as well as highly trained and financially established gold and silver smiths, jewelers, and business negotiators.⁶⁶ Social status similarly could vary within the group as alluded to previously and depending on the complexity of the work itself; freedmen and free persons certainly accounted for a significant amount of *opifices* and *tabernarii*.⁶⁷

As far as evaluating the relative prevalence of each type of employment in society, any estimates would entail some overlap of individuals who may have worked in two fields at one time or who could switch fields over their lifetime. As we can expect, slaves and freedmen dominated production in the urban households especially of the upper class and sub-elites.⁶⁸ However, freedmen could integrate themselves, often with the help of their former master, into society through a business or trade in a way that a slave could not.⁶⁹ While no scholars have separated the working population based on their employment or field of work, we can infer from the break down by social status which social groups were likely to be found doing what type of

⁶⁴ Treggiari (1980:53) cites Ulpian in the *Digest*. The appendix to this article gives a lengthy list of the documented types of *opifices* and *tabernarii* in Rome, ranging from seemingly trivial jobs to the necessary or standard jobs like the ones already mentioned. See Bradley (1994:64) for a discussion of slaves working at factories that produced Arretine ware (i.e. red glazed pottery) in the middle of the first century BC.

⁶⁵ Holleran (2011:168) makes this point specifically for freedmen who were craftsmen.

⁶⁶ Treggiari 1980:55. Holleran (2011:174) mentions “street trading” as a low skill and low capital occupation for more desperate workers or casual laborers.

⁶⁷ Treggiari (1980:55-6) alludes to the latter point, as does Holleran (2011:167-8) who comments on how we have more epigraphical evidence of slave and freed craftsmen in Rome than of freeborn craftsmen, owing to the freedman’s desire to commemorate his work.

⁶⁸ Bradley 1994:65; Holleran 2011:166-7.

⁶⁹ Bradley 1994:76.

work.⁷⁰ As said above, the majority of urban slaves and ex-slaves were employed in household serving and production. A sizeable percentage of freed people could be found in small businesses and trades or were clients of a patron, and they may have had a few slaves as assistants or employees. Craftsmen and artisans consisted of a majority of the skilled free population supplemented by some successful freedmen often as managers and by a small number of unskilled workers or slaves as employees. Daily laborers and construction or transportation workers altogether had the smallest number of workers, who typically were unskilled natives or immigrants under the direction of a more skilled manager and assisted by a few, if any, slaves.⁷¹ Overall, the biggest limitation to assigning numerical values to each source of employment is once again the issue of not having reliable population estimates of Rome or documented industry sizes.

Types of Employers

Many sources of work have been mentioned previously in connection to the types of employees used, but one cumulative restatement will both help with grasping the overall picture and set up a discussion of the impact of social status. An employer can be the master of a house, a former master, a patron, a business or shop owner, a landowner, a farmer, a merchant, a trader, a craftsman, the military, or someone who executes various government programs for distributing goods or doing maintenance work. Regardless of their industry, each employer has specific needs for laborers ranging in quantity, quality, cost, and duration of service. This requires different groups to be available: skilled workers, cheap daily laborers, long-term

⁷⁰ Killgrove (2004:14) breaks down the population by social status and legal status (slave, freedman, and free).

⁷¹ Holleran 2011:170-2. Additionally, Holleran would argue that construction projects, both public and private, happened more frequently than is implied here, and they required lots of labor (slave, freed, or free depending on the public or private nature of the work and its dangerousness) to complete.

workers, producers, merchants, and administrators of a business. Only when the worker's characteristics match up with the labor needs of the business or its manager, and when expectations on each side are met, a transaction takes place that benefits both groups through the production of some output or through income earned. While transactions exist for any kind of employment, the circumstances and requirements of the work can vary greatly, but generally they depend on the social status of the owner and the scale of the business.

From the management perspective, an employer can structure their labor force however they see fit as long as their labor and additional inputs are used efficiently to maximize profit. Some employers are directly involved in their business and its day-to-day operations, while others manage it through responsible or loyal agents. In fact, many would have freedmen and slaves administer their business abroad, and upper class masters would closely supervise if a slave were using his master's money for business.⁷² A major benefit of utilizing slave labor was that slaves learned many skills through their experiences in a household or business, including but not limited to financial activities, the Latin language, craft trades, production skills, management skills, and administration.⁷³ Learning such things increases their value to their master in the long run as well as their value to society if they are freed and contribute to production in or outside of their former master's business.⁷⁴

As concerns working in the city, the options are limited by one's social status; people of higher status are more likely to run or manage others who produce output, while lower status individuals do a bulk of the manual or physical work of production.⁷⁵ For shopkeepers, we may reasonably assume that shops in close proximity and in close communication with a house were

⁷² Treggiari (1980:53) cites Ulpian in the *Digest*.

⁷³ Holleran 2011:167-8.

⁷⁴ Holleran 2011:168.

⁷⁵ Holleran 2011:166.

run by the head of that house, operating through slave or freed agents.⁷⁶ However, for small shops that are less labor-intensive, self-employment and the employment of one's family and household slaves seems a realistic alternative to hiring workers. On the other hand, patrons rely heavily on hired labor since they are responsible for running their own business and earning profits through the legwork of many clients, both freed and free.

When considering the impact of social status on the labor market, we see that those in the upper class have the ability financially to delegate their work to others who, in turn, bear the responsibility of using their employer's resources in a profitable way that reflects well on both of them. This pattern is apparent throughout the upper class, but it can also be seen in the sub-elites of the lower class with enough means and business activity to need workers from the labor market. These employers would be more likely to demand slaves and/or skilled free workers or freedmen, in order to maintain their appearance, prestige, or reputation.⁷⁷ Small business owners and craftsmen with less means may be more price sensitive when it comes to hired labor, so they might favor cheaper workers with some skills or contract workers. Overall, daily or contract laborers may have been looked down on as the lowest in society, especially if they were poor or foreigners, who were already despised by some.⁷⁸

Conclusion

The working population made up a large majority of the urban population, wherein a small percentage of the upper class and sub-elites employed large numbers of domestic slaves and freedmen as well as external freedmen and skilled workers as clients or business managers. The remaining working population consisted of skilled craftsmen, artisans, and shopkeepers and

⁷⁶ Treggiari 1980:53.

⁷⁷ Bradley 1994:65-6; Holleran 2011:166-7.

⁷⁸ See ancient authors who looked down on foreigners, as cited in Noy (2000:34-5).

unskilled daily laborers, transportation, and construction workers. While this appears to be a straightforward flow of work from the top to the rest of society, many nuances existed within each type of work and each skill level, as well as complexities of social status and perceived status. Among the skilled labor groups, freed persons especially were more likely to have an opportunity for advancement within their industry and within their social sub-strata as skilled craftsman and managers, as long as their experience and reliability showed in their work.

Chapter 2

Migration to Rome: Supply and Demand of Migrants

While the previous chapter discussed the labor market in Rome with all its workers and types of work, this chapter evaluates how immigrants in particular fit into those categories of workers as well as where these immigrants came from and why they chose Rome as opposed to any other city. Since Rome was growing rapidly in size and economic power through the Late Republic, a significant amount of immigration was needed not only to sustain its population but also to increase it. Slaves were the major source of migrants, but voluntary migrants, while few in number, added considerably to the labor market through their own skilled labor or by providing capital and sources of employment to others. This chapter includes the definition of migration, the types of migrants, the possible motivations to move, and how the migrants assimilate to life in Rome. The last section discusses the demand for slaves and for voluntary migrants in the urban labor market, as well as the supply of migrants in both groups.

Migration and the Characteristics of Migrants

Migration in modern economics is considered to be moving from one place of residence to another, and it can be temporary or permanent and with a family or individually. There are a variety of factors that influence the decision to migrate, and economists generally classify them as either “push” or “pull” factors. Push factors are those things that encourage people to leave an area, and pull factors draw people to a certain place.⁷⁹ Distance from one’s current residence to another can be either a push or pull factor, but economists typically find that the shorter the distance is between the two locations, the more likely the person will decide to move. For

⁷⁹ Holleran (2011:160) and Noy (2000:87) briefly describe the push-pull theory, with some examples.

internal migration in particular, people tend to move from a rural area to an urban area, especially in less developed countries. Applying this general understanding of migration to the people in the Roman Empire during the Late Republic and early in the empire can reveal information about Rome's labor market and how migration affected it. The two main groups of migrants to Rome were forced migrants (i.e. slaves) and voluntary migrants, and they will be treated separately here since their circumstances and motivations are so different.

For voluntary migrants, some push factors may be political pressure, violence in the area, an economic downturn, or poor and/or dangerous living conditions. Pull factors can include perceived economic opportunities, hope for a better life, pursuing a better job, fulfilling a job or political duty, going to practice one's profession elsewhere or operate a shop or trade, reuniting with family, or pursuing an education or teaching opportunity. Moreover, Rome would have attracted rural residents because it was a large urban area with more opportunities in general. Regardless of the person's length of stay, the pull factors tended to attract people to Rome more than push factors, since the city had such a large scope of opportunities and attractions more so than any other city.⁸⁰ Seneca mentions several reasons and occupations that would have encouraged non-natives of Rome to go there in his letter to his mother Helvia.

Ex municipiis et coloniis suis, ex toto denique orbe terrarum confluxerunt. Alios adduxit ambitio, alios necessitas officii publici, alios inposita legatio, alios luxuria opportunum et opulentum vitiis locum quaerens, alios liberalium studiorum cupiditas, alios spectacula; quosdam traxit amicitia, quosdam industria laxam ostendendae virtuti nanta materiam; quidam venalem formam attulerunt, quidam venalem eloquentiam. Nullum non hominum genus concucurrit in urbem et virtutibus et vitiis magna pretia ponentem.
(*Sen. ad Helviam* 6.2-3)⁸¹

⁸⁰ Noy 2000:91; Holleran 2011:163.

⁸¹ Lucius Annasus Seneca. *Moral Essays: Volume II*. John W. Basore, trans. *The Loeb Classical Library*. London: Harvard University Press, 1932.

From their towns and colonies, from the whole world, in fact, hither have [those in Rome] flocked. Some have been brought by ambition, some by the obligation of a public trust, some by an envoy's duty having been laid upon them, some, seeking a convenient and rich field for vice, by luxury, some by a desire for the higher studies, some by the public spectacles; some have been drawn by friendship, some, seeing the ample opportunity for displaying energy, by the chance to work; some have presented their beauty for sale, some their eloquence for sale. Every class of person has swarmed into the city that offers high prizes for both virtues and vices.⁸²

His list assumes that people are free and have either the wealth or the desire to move, which leaves out the largest groups of immigrants, namely soldiers and slaves.⁸³ While Seneca's list is rather selective, it echoes the motivations found in other sources.⁸⁴

These motivations are also impacted by the social status and occupation of the type of people who migrate. Roman citizens were able to move freely within Italy and had an easier time settling in a new place than non-citizens within or outside of Italy; however, this did not deter non-citizens from migrating. Upper class citizens would have had the money and the connections to migrate to and from Rome with relative ease.⁸⁵ They could utilize Rome's market for luxury goods and services, and they benefitted from using domestic slave labor.⁸⁶ The politicians and sub-elites like lawyers and ambassadors could migrate as they wanted to or if it provided a better opportunity for their occupation.⁸⁷ Rome was especially attractive to mobile professionals like teachers and sculptors who sought out those who demanded their services.⁸⁸ In the Late Republic and Early Empire, nearly all well known teachers at Rome were immigrants from outside Italy, in addition to many doctors, since both groups were encouraged to come to Rome by the state

⁸² Lucius Annasus Seneca. *Moral Essays: Volume II*. John W. Basore, trans. *The Loeb Classical Library*. London: Harvard University Press, 1932.

⁸³ Noy 2000:90. Also Holleran 2011:161.

⁸⁴ Noy 2000:91; Holleran 2011:161.

⁸⁵ Noy 2000:89.

⁸⁶ Noy 2000:89.

⁸⁷ See Noy (2000:97-106) for a detailed discussion as well as specific examples of the motivations and experiences of politicians, lawyers, and ambassadors to Rome.

⁸⁸ Noy 2000:89.

sometimes through giving them citizenship but otherwise by exempting them from expulsion.⁸⁹ Artisans, craftsmen, performers, and merchants probably relied more on job opportunities to make the move to Rome; but they could also be temporary or seasonal migrants.⁹⁰ Soldiers may have overlapped with daily labor if they were to stay in Rome during their breaks from active service, which makes them more difficult to identify and, as such, are not treated as a separate group in this discussion.

For slaves, on the other hand, their situation depended on where and how they first became a slave. Most often, slaves would be captives taken after a Roman military conquest and sold to slave traders who followed the army around.⁹¹ A majority of this supply of slaves would be women and children, and the rest would be the remaining enemy soldiers after the Roman leaders and soldiers took the most desirable captives for themselves.⁹² Slaves may pass through the hands of a few different merchants before being sold to their final master, and, with each trade, the slaves' price would increase by some margin, similar to the markup for goods. Rome was a major hub for slave auctions, for which the island Delos was a way station and merchant hub, but there were a number of other coastal cities that were popular selling locations, such as Ephesus.⁹³ The ages of the slaves varied, but their youthfulness, physical abilities, and skills were more important than age. Still, young children and young adults were probably the most desirable and as such could earn the most profit for sellers, since slaves were commodities to be sold rather than people. To get slaves to an auction, such as in Rome, merchants had to use some

⁸⁹ Noy (2000:94-5) discusses several examples of foreigners who taught in Rome and were successful, such as Quintilian and including some ex-slaves and freedmen. Noy (2000:47) mentions that doctors and some teachers were welcome in Rome because their skills were needed; the first doctor in Rome came in 219 BC and was granted citizenship. Julius Caesar gave all doctors and teachers living in Rome citizenship (Suet. *D.J.* 42), and Augustus exempted them from the general expulsion of foreigners once (Suet. *Aug.* 42).

⁹⁰ See Noy (2000: 113-123) for a detailed discussion as well as specific examples of the motivations and experiences of these types of people.

⁹¹ Joshel 2010:84, 89.

⁹² Joshel 2010:83-5.

⁹³ Joshel 2010:90; about Delos, see Bradley (1994:37).

combination of marching and shipping the slaves, each of which had their own risks to the slaves in addition to disease, malnourishment, and injury.⁹⁴ Once they reached Rome, they were probably sold as quickly as possible; otherwise, they were stored until sold. The prices at which slaves were sold depended only on what value the buyer would get from the slave's future work; the price did not take into account any of the slave's suffering or lack of freedom. The slave market did not use that information in the price, and, with incomplete information, the market could not balance the price that slaves paid in their suffering to the buyer's potential gain. After being sold to a master, these slaves depended on their masters for work, food and shelter; moreover, the transition into slave labor would have been difficult, not to mention handling however poorly their master treated them.

While voluntary migrants had more control over their transition to Rome, there were still many challenges to travelling to and living in Rome. Their age mattered for how easy or difficult getting around Rome was; but it is very difficult to know at what age someone came to Rome, since only sometimes epigraphs record it. However, the immigrant's motivation to move indicates roughly what age he or she might have come. Individuals coming to Rome for work, politics, or education would typically be between their late teens and early twenties.⁹⁵ For families, it was probable for the head of a household to move first and prepare for the rest of the family to come later.⁹⁶ Soldiers recruited from Italy or beyond may have been in their early to mid twenties.⁹⁷ Overall, the more people and the older the people are, the longer it would have taken to get to Rome. Moreover, getting to Rome was not easy since travel on foot or horseback

⁹⁴ Joshel 2010:93.

⁹⁵ Noy 2000:66.

⁹⁶ Noy 2000:67-8.

⁹⁷ Noy 2000:66.

or travel by boat each presented their own dangers.⁹⁸ Sailing to Rome or to the nearest port town was normally the quickest way, depending on the time of year and any pirates that may interfere.⁹⁹ Walking long distances on foot was tiring, and baggage had to be light; travelling on horses would be quicker but more expensive. But, the extension of roads and trade routes over time and resulting from military campaigns helped migrants find a path as well as resources in towns along the way.¹⁰⁰

Once immigrants got to Rome, ideally they would have had some connection in the city or a tie with someone living there who could provide temporary housing or help them find a permanent place. Otherwise, they would have to ask for a place at an inn or ask around at a tavern for a contact.¹⁰¹ Another way would have been to go to someone prominent in the area or someone in the migrant's profession, like a patron, and ask for arrangements or assistance.¹⁰² After getting settled into their new residence and finding work, neither of which were easy tasks, these immigrants also had to acclimate to a new region and a new set of common illnesses. For immigrants from far away, new strains of diseases that are native to Rome would have posed a big threat, as would easily communicable diseases for those living or working in crowded places.¹⁰³ Several scholars have noted that a certain strand of malaria reoccurred in the late summer months every year, and it regularly drove up the death rates in those months.¹⁰⁴ Another health concern in the city was the low birth rate, which might have been more by choice than by

⁹⁸ Noy 2000:141-2.

⁹⁹ Noy 2000:143-4.

¹⁰⁰ Noy 2000:141.

¹⁰¹ Noy 2000:149.

¹⁰² Noy (2000:146-50) includes descriptions and examples of how some individuals went about getting or finding housing.

¹⁰³ Noy 2000:18.

¹⁰⁴ Noy (2000:18) briefly mentions the presence of malaria. Killgrove (2010:53-4) notes that individuals of Italian, Greek, and African decent may have had a genetic mutation that protects them against this particular strain of malaria, whereas other ethnicities would have been susceptible.

low fertility or infant mortality.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, it may also be that migrants added to the population enough to counterbalance the low birth rate. Generally, immigrants to Rome had to have some plan in mind for moving and getting settled, but there were still housing and health challenges to face once there.

Assessing the Supply of and Demand for Migrants

Both slaves and voluntary immigrants to Rome had their reasons to come and obstacles to deal with, but their role in society will also reveal how they lived and more importantly how they were necessary for the city's growth. Each group had their own supply and demand that should be treated separately to fully understand them. Generally, as most scholars agree, Rome needed a certain volume of immigrants to support and expand the economic growth in the city, which was due to greater levels of production and capital flowing in from military campaigns. We know that slaves were brought to Rome and free migrants found their way there either temporarily or permanently; however, the documentation of these people is very scant and unrepresentative of all immigrants to Rome. What follows in this discussion is a description of the most likely roles that immigrants filled, based on primary sources as well as scholars' reconstructions from them.

Involuntary Migrants

Slaves filled a great variety of jobs for their masters, much like voluntary migrants could be found in any number of jobs and trades. Urban slaves in particular supported primarily the elites and sub-elites through domestic work and, sometimes, administrative work for their master's business.¹⁰⁶ In other situations, slaves may serve as craftsmen's assistants for making

¹⁰⁵ Noy 2000:18.

¹⁰⁶ Joshel 2010:165, 179.

products, sourcing materials, managing other workers, and distributing finished goods.¹⁰⁷

Otherwise, slaves could be used for local farming and distribution, or slaves could be owned by the state, to be used for public building projects and grain distribution.¹⁰⁸

As far as estimating how many slaves were imported per year and retained in Rome by their masters, scholars vary on the numerical assessment, in part because the exact population of Rome and even Italy is largely based on estimates from incomplete sources. One scholar, Walter Scheidel, has worked extensively to defend plausible population estimates based on his own input and calculations as well as other scholars' estimates. He uses these estimates to discuss the sizes of different groups within the population, namely slaves and free immigrants. Through his discussion of the probable number of urban and rural slaves in Italy in total over the 2nd and 1st century BC, Scheidel estimates that the total number of slaves imported over these 200 years was between 1.7 million and 4.36 million, and after accounting for the annual decrease from mortality, the net gain to the population of Italy was between 720,000 and 1.59 million.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, he calculates from primary and secondary sources about slaves in agriculture, in other rural occupations, and in cities that the number of rural slaves during this time was between 320,000 and 800,000 while urban slaves numbered 530,000 to 1.06 million.¹¹⁰ For Rome in particular as a home for urban slaves, he approximates that 220,000 to 440,000 slaves could be found serving the senators, *eques*, and sub-elites residing there.¹¹¹ He points out that these upper

¹⁰⁷ Joshel (2010:195-214) discusses many examples of slaves in workshops, taverns, and other businesses.

¹⁰⁸ Bradley 1994:65.

¹⁰⁹ Scheidel 2005:77.

¹¹⁰ Scheidel 2005:77. See pages 67-71 for Scheidel's support and rationale for his estimates of rural slaves in a variety of occupations. See pages 66-67 for that of urban slaves.

¹¹¹ Scheidel 2005:67. For calculating the number of urban slaves for the elites and sub-elites residing in Rome, Scheidel assumes that all senators, half of the equestrians, and half of the sub-elites of Italy lived in Rome and had slaves there. Many scholars agree that the total population of Rome (i.e. the city itself and the surrounding countryside) including males, females, children, slaves, non-citizens, and soldiers ranged between roughly 800,000 to 1 million at the time of Augustus (Hopkins 1978:97 and Noy 2000:15). To reach that size, the Republic in the first

class Romans tended to have many slaves each, and since most of them resided in Rome, it makes sense that there is a greater concentration of slaves in Rome compared to other cities.¹¹²

Scheidel's calculation of the number of Italian slaves is helpful for understanding how large of an impact slaves had on the Italian population during the two hundred years leading up to the slave trade's peak. However, it is also helpful to express the influx of slaves in terms of the number needed to sustain the population and then to grow the population per year. From Scheidel's numbers, anywhere from 8,500 to 21,800 slaves were imported each year, and the net gain to Italy's population was between 3,600 and 7,950 per year.¹¹³ The average number of slaves imported each year then was 15,150, with an average net gain of 5,775.¹¹⁴ The actual number of slaves imported each year may have varied greatly, depending on the campaigns being waged and other factors. Another scholar, Keith Bradley, suggests that for the years between 50 BC and AD 150, nearly 500,000 slaves were needed per year to sustain the whole empire's demand for slaves, and since the empire continued to expand through this time, the increase in demand makes sense.¹¹⁵ Moreover, even from 65 BC to 30 BC, 100,000 slaves were needed in Italy per year.¹¹⁶ While Scheidel's estimates average the whole time period, it may in fact have happened that there was a greater concentration of slaves imported in the later years of the 1st century BC.

two centuries BC experienced a rapidly increasing population as the empire was expanding, which Noy (2000:15-7) argues using Morley's reconstructions (1996:38) and the estimates of four other scholars.

¹¹² Scheidel 2005:67.

¹¹³ These figures come from taking Scheidel's total number of slaves imported and dividing by 200 years (i.e. 1.7 million/200=8,500 slaves per year and 4.36 million/200=21,800). The net gain to the population was similarly arrived at (i.e. 720,000/200=3,600 and 1.59 million/200=7,950).

¹¹⁴ These figures are the averages of the ranges produced in the above note (i.e. the average of 8,500 and 21,800 is 15,150 and the average of 3,600 and 7,950 is 5,775). Moreover, Scheidel (1997:167) estimates that about 10,000 to 15,000 persons per year were traded into the empire, with the number peaking during wartime.

¹¹⁵ Bradley 1994:32. Let it be noted that Bradley provides no support or rationale for arriving at this number for this time period, so it is not a totally credible estimate. Further, he says that that amount of slaves was needed, but not necessarily imported, each year.

¹¹⁶ Bradley 1994:31-2. See the previous note's concern.

It is important to remember that Bradley's estimates include not only imported slaves, typically resulting from wars, but also children born to slaves and children who became slaves through infant exposure, both of which were significant sources of slaves. Children born to a female slave were considered slaves as well, and they were called *vernae*.¹¹⁷ Natural reproduction of this sort made a considerable contribution to the supply of slaves each year, and slave owners valued *vernae* as worthwhile investments to raise in the household since they were easier to train.¹¹⁸ These *vernae* would have decreased the need for imported migrant slaves but only slightly on account their relative rarity within the total slave population in the Late Republic. Scheidel, when considering slave sources in particular after the Republic, argues that based on the lower limit of his numerical estimates, 75% of all slaves were born into slavery during the Principate.¹¹⁹ A trend as significant as this likely developed throughout the end of the Late Republic. Furthermore, since infant exposure was a common practice for a variety of reasons, children found after being exposed could be used as slaves (i.e. as a source of labor acquired for free) or even sold into slavery.¹²⁰ An additional source of slaves was from the kidnapping and trafficking of persons by pirates, especially the pirates of Cilicia in the early 2nd century BC who brought their victims to the island of Delos where merchants were waiting to take them.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Bradley 1994:33-4.

¹¹⁸ Bradley 1994:34.

¹¹⁹ Scheidel 1997:167. That 75% of all slaves were born into slavery during the Empire seems plausible considering how the primary source of slaves shifted after the Republic. The Late Republic especially had a number of Roman wars and conquests through which captives were sold into slavery in the empire on a large scale. This source of slaves would have contributed largely to the estimated 15,150 slaves imported per year, as shown previously. In contrast, the Early Empire was known as a time of peace and minimal open warfare, and so the number of slaves provided through war sharply decreased compared to previous years. Given the sheer number of slaves already in the empire due to the wars of the Republic, natural reproduction of slaves provided an alternate source to satisfy the demand for slaves and perhaps was encouraged by slave owners.

¹²⁰ Bradley 1994:35.

¹²¹ Bradley 1994:37.

Not only did the number of slaves imported per year or born into slavery vary, but the areas where slaves were originally taken from varied depending on the year and the military conquests of the Roman army. While slaves born into slavery and slaves resulting from exposure could come from anywhere, slaves imported from merchants who followed the Roman army around on campaign have easily identified origins. Gauls were brought to Rome as slaves through the Early and Middle Republic, and as areas of Gaul became Roman provinces through the Late Republic, such as Gallia Narbonensis in 121 BC, Gauls would have started to come to Rome as free immigrants.¹²² These areas still provided slaves to Rome as they were conquered and prisoners were sold into slavery during the Late Republic, such as happened during Caesar's campaigns in Gaul from 58 to 51 BC.¹²³ Slaves from Hispania might have ended up in Rome due to the Roman military's presence there during the Second Punic War as well as during the 2nd century BC and again during Augustus' campaigns there.¹²⁴ Germans came infrequently to Rome as slaves for use in farming or the military in the Late Republic, but they came in larger numbers when Augustus was campaigning there as well as in Raetia, Noricum, Dalmatia, Pannonia, Moesia, and Dacia.¹²⁵ There is evidence of Macedonian soldiers in Rome, and presumably there were slaves too; however, inscriptions of free immigrants are largely lacking.¹²⁶ Thracians were noticeable in Rome in the 1st century AD, but Thracian slaves had a significant presence well before then.¹²⁷ Many Greeks from the peninsula came to Rome as slaves through the 2nd and 1st centuries BC from sporadic fights resulting in enslavement, and often, manumitted Greeks with highly desirable skills could become distinguished residents in Rome.¹²⁸ The slave trade was

¹²² Noy 2000:205.

¹²³ Noy 2000:205-6.

¹²⁴ Noy 2000:206.

¹²⁵ Noy 2000:213.

¹²⁶ Noy 2000:214.

¹²⁷ Noy 2000:214.

¹²⁸ Noy 2000:224.

very active in areas of Asia Minor, Syria, North Africa, and Egypt, and slaves from these places were known to be easily available in Rome and of good quality for certain uses.¹²⁹ Wherever the slaves' origins are, they were still seen as foreigners to the native Italians, and that connotation sticks to slaves and ex-slaves, and even to their children.

Voluntary Migrants

Free immigrants to Rome are harder to identify than slaves and just as hard to count within the population. Focusing solely on Rome, scholar Neville Morley estimates that Rome's net annual population growth in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC averaged 4,000 per year, and this growth required a net influx of 7,000 immigrants per year from the free population alone (i.e. not including the immigration of slaves).¹³⁰ Rome, with its 1 million inhabitants, needed to gain at least 10,000 immigrants per year, whether free migrants or slaves, to maintain its population.¹³¹ In order to grow the population, then, the city needed more than 10,000 immigrants per year to remain in Rome, while an even greater number of people would be moving within or outside of Italy. These 10,000 voluntary immigrants and slaves do not represent a historically precise number of migrants to Rome, but they represent the scale of the migration into Rome itself at a time when the city was able to absorb so many new individuals. Moreover, this number certainly changed over time, and the percentage of slaves versus free people certainly fluctuated depending on the economic and political situation at the time. In general, though, the volume of free immigrants coming to Rome from outside Italy increased during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD

¹²⁹ Noy (2000:227-55) treats people from each of these areas separately and discusses that region's relationship to the Roman Empire over time.

¹³⁰ Morley 1996:39 and Noy (2000:19) who supports Morley's view.

¹³¹ Morley (1996:44) bases this immigration rate on the difference between the birth rate and death rate in pre-industrial London between 1650 and 1750, which was estimated to be 10,000 per year. Noy (2000:19) supports Morley's view.

(compared to their volume during the Late Republic) while slave and internal Italian immigration decreased.¹³² This may mean that the pull factors drew more people from the provinces or from outside of the empire to move to Rome in the Early Empire. On the other hand, the greatest volume of slaves came to Rome (and Italy) during the times when Roman military conquests were at their most successful point, which was in the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD.

Much of Chapter 1 in this thesis was devoted to the motivations of these free migrants to Rome, and the emphasis was on their working status and skills, since that determined in part their success in their new residence. However, their place of origin also plays a role in what work they were thought to be inclined to do, which can reveal more concretely what jobs they may have had in Rome according to generalized statements in literature as well as some inscriptions. From epigraphic evidence from the 1st to 3rd centuries AD where a person's home country was given, soldiers or military personnel came most frequently from Dacia, Germany, Gaul, Noricum, Pannonia, Raetia, and Thrace, and civilians often came from Africa, Asia, Bithynia, Egypt, Gaul, Germany, Hispania, Pannonia, and Thrace.¹³³

Gauls and Spaniards came to Rome as certain areas were increasingly Romanized, and there are records of embassies visiting Rome, senators from these areas, and famous authors and teachers.¹³⁴ The Roman army also recruited men from these countries for roles as bodyguards, praetorians, and *equites singulares* in the Late Republic and more often in the Early Empire.¹³⁵ Free immigrants from Germany, Raetia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dacia, Dalmatia, and Moesia would have begun to travel to Rome in the 1st century BC and even more so at the time of Augustus.¹³⁶ As Germany and these northern Greek areas were conquered by the Roman army, they provided

¹³² Noy 2000:22.

¹³³ Noy 2000:59-60.

¹³⁴ Noy 2000:206-9.

¹³⁵ Noy 2000:206.

¹³⁶ Noy 2000:212-3.

slaves, gladiators, occasional lower class migrants, and *equites singulares*; in the Early Empire, they were recruited as members of the legion, praetorians, and the emperors' bodyguards.¹³⁷

Thracians were a noticeable ethnic group in Rome, more so than most other nearby ethnic groups, while Macedonians either did not migrate to Rome often or preferred not to mention their origins on inscriptions.¹³⁸

Greeks had a significant place in the culture and society at Rome, so much so that philosophers, poets, and private tutors were in demand in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC.¹³⁹ Greek doctors were prominent at Rome as well as Greek craftsmen and ambassadors, but there is scant evidence of Greeks recruited for the Roman army.¹⁴⁰ Free migrants from Asia Minor with a Greek background are quite frequently found in epitaphs, and cities in Asia Minor tended to send embassies to Rome more than most other areas.¹⁴¹ Senators from Asia Minor arose during the 2nd century AD, but before then, there were known athletes, doctors, philosophers, and poets in Rome based on inscriptions.¹⁴² Some senators in the 2nd century AD were from Syrian cities, and there were a handful of Syrian soldiers and civilians.¹⁴³ From Egypt, several members of the Ptolemaic family stayed in Rome occasionally in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, and many Alexandrians were active in literature at Rome, medicine, and astrology.¹⁴⁴ Egyptians were even recruited for the Roman fleet and the legions, and trade in corn and commodities attracted many merchants to Rome.¹⁴⁵ North African ambassadors, ruling families, and senators came to Rome in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, and many traders, soldiers, and charioteers were found in

¹³⁷ Noy 2000:214-6.

¹³⁸ Noy 2000:214.

¹³⁹ Noy 2000:225.

¹⁴⁰ Noy 2000:225.

¹⁴¹ Noy 2000:227-8.

¹⁴² Noy 2000:228-9.

¹⁴³ Noy 2000:235-6.

¹⁴⁴ Noy 2000:245-6.

¹⁴⁵ Noy 2000:246-7.

Rome.¹⁴⁶ From this overview of the foreign persons recorded as living or spending time in Rome, it is clear that a huge variety of ethnic migrants found opportunities to live and work in Rome, and that Rome was an attractive city for them in this way.

Conclusion

Migratory groups coming to Rome in the Late Republic and Early Empire were diverse, including slaves, free citizens, and foreigners. Migrants faced difficulties getting to Rome by boat and by foot, and once they reached the city, they struggled initially with finding housing and employment unless they had a network to rely on. As a dense urban area, Rome also posed a threat to migrants' health with its distinctive diseases like malaria. Slaves were in high demand to fill various roles, as suggested by scholarly estimates for the number of slaves in the Italian population and in Rome itself. In addition, free immigrants to Rome at an estimated rate of around 10,000 per year were needed to sustain the city's population. Lastly, the countries that provided both slaves and voluntary migrants showed the diversity of ethnicities to be found in Rome as well as the appeal that the city had to peoples all over Europe, Asia, and Africa. While this chapter introduced some qualitative and quantitative aspects of immigration to Rome, the next chapter seeks to understand the impact of the different types of migrant groups on each other and on the labor market in Rome. A modern economic model that analyzes the effects of migration on different worker groups is used to assess how slaves, freedmen, skilled migrants, and unskilled migrants interacted with each other in the labor market.

¹⁴⁶ Noy 2000:251-3.

Chapter 3

Applying an Economic Migration Model to Ancient Migration: the Effects of Migration on the Labor Market in Rome

This third chapter covers how and why migration in the economic sense can be applied to such a distant and seemingly different economy as that of Rome, as well as what important gains can be made by studying Rome in modern terms. While the previous chapter observed the qualities of migrants at the micro level and estimated the quantity supplied and demanded of slaves and free persons, the current chapter uses these discoveries in a macroeconomic model to measure the overall effects of migration. In essence, this approach considers what impact the immigration of different working groups had on the labor market in Rome in terms of the competition for jobs and the wage rates. The first aim in this chapter is to argue how Rome can be seen as having its own unique labor market, where working groups sought employment and a variety of employers provided opportunities. The second part explains the supply and demand model of migration that analyzes the changes in employment level and wages, and it describes how the working groups in Rome can fit into the model. In the final section, this model is applied and analyzed in full for Rome in order to discuss the implications for the groups in the workforce, their wages, and other outcomes. This discussion leads to a few major conclusions that contribute to the scholarship concerning the comparison of the economic situation of slaves and slaves turned freedmen to the free residents of Rome.

Relating Urban Rome's Labor Market to Modern Labor Markets

While the previous chapters have proceeded on the assumption that Rome in fact has a labor market to some degree, some economists and historians may not be so quick to hold that assumption. From a modern perspective, labor markets simply exist and have existed over time more or less, and they are easily observable and measurable. However, when thinking about Rome and its incredible growth through the Late Republic and early into the 1st century AD, it is easy to presume that from a lack of concrete evidence consistent with modern standards, there was not an established and widespread labor market. Or perhaps, the economy at that time was not enough of a capitalistic economy to have pervasive use of (mostly) free markets determining the prices and demand for goods and services, and so also for labor. While the lack of evidence hinders scholars, it does not exclude the possibility of a labor market, even in a simplistic form, existing in such a large economic center as Rome. In this context, the assumption that Rome had a labor market ought to not be such an absurd proposition, and identifying some of the similarities between Rome and modern economies can support this assumption.

From a non-expert's perspective, there seem to be two relatively easy ways to show the relationship between modern economies and the Roman economy. One way is to show how the Roman economy generally and the labor market in Rome, as a specific piece of it, are similar enough to modern economies in how they function, their basic principles, or basic labor market components, such that using modern terms and concepts is helpful in understanding their Roman counterparts. One scholar, Peter Temin, has argued that from the evidence about business activities, there are recorded interactions in Rome and the empire that can be easily seen as market transactions, where goods are exchanged for other goods or money.¹⁴⁷ These transactions presumably happened on a large scale, for example in a region or city, so much so that this

¹⁴⁷ Temin 2001:170, 173-4.

economy can be considered a market economy where prices for resources can change freely due to some change in the availability of the item to buyers.¹⁴⁸ People paid to rent apartments, free workers were paid wages, and people bought food and drink for themselves with coins; in each, there existed demand for goods and a supply of them, and so there were transactions that took place in the market.¹⁴⁹ In a city like Rome, production and consumption of goods happened simultaneously and abundantly, and so those goods had to have some value placed upon them in order for exchanges to occur and for production to be profitable.¹⁵⁰ Another example of a market for “goods” was the slave trade, wherein the price of slaves reflected their value or quality and a large volume of transactions took place in several major cities. Furthermore, there are detailed records of loans at a variety of rates, again showing the ability of prices to change over time and over regions.¹⁵¹ But the prevalence of loans also affirms that one could lend or borrow in the market in Rome because the demand was there and people sought profit from loaning money. This makes it a capital market open to whoever wanted to participate, much like the modern financial industry has markets for capital of different types.¹⁵² While the market economy in Rome was not as thoroughly developed or regulated as market economies today, it still operated as a medium for transactions between people with fluctuations in price, as Temin’s variety of literary examples show.¹⁵³ It is not unreasonable to assume that the labor market in Rome

¹⁴⁸ Temin 2001:170, 173-4. Temin (2013:11) qualifies this image of abundant markets by adding that “not every resource in a market economy is allocated through a market.”

¹⁴⁹ Temin 2001:173-4.

¹⁵⁰ Temin 2001:174, 177-8.

¹⁵¹ Temin 2001:174-5.

¹⁵² Temin 2001:175.

¹⁵³ Temin 2001:173-9. Temin’s examples come mainly from the Early Empire, but it would not be odd to assume that the economic activities he cites developed and occurred for some time before the Early Empire. Rathbone (2011) supports the view that there was at least some integration in markets for products shipped to Rome, specifically for wheat since its price varied with the distance traveled to get it to Rome. However, Bang (2008:31) disagrees with Temin on the idea that some markets were in fact linked across the entire Roman economy.

operated similarly in that the market allowed for transactions to occur, wherein workers were free to choose their wages from the available work and employers had specific needs for labor.

Another way to show the relationship between modern and ancient is to see how the two are similar in ways that matter significantly for this particular study of labor markets. In other words, this way compares the activities behind studying labor markets, such as comparing labor groups among each other, the roles groups fill in the workforce, how they contribute to the society at large with their work and personal life, wages for different occupations, and changes in the number of people employed due to migration. As Temin explains, a labor market is present when workers are able to change occupations or locations and when they are paid for their output doing the type of work that they choose.¹⁵⁴ While not everyone has to move within the labor market, there is enough movement happening, and it is always an option for people to take advantage of a new position or new profits elsewhere.¹⁵⁵ Often this means that labor can respond to changes in technology or changes in price or demand. Rural Italian workers had relatively little pressure to move between jobs locally without one of those changes, but workers could look to bigger centers of economic activity like cities where they perceived that there was a better opportunity than their current position.¹⁵⁶ Their skill level would also determine their success in finding a new job, and there are records of urban workers in both simple and more complex jobs that were paid at different rates.¹⁵⁷ The labor market in Rome shares many of these characteristics with modern labor markets partly because they are associated with dense, urbanized areas where many workers and many types of work are usually found.¹⁵⁸ One

¹⁵⁴ Temin 2004:515, 537; Temin 2013:116.

¹⁵⁵ Temin 2004:515-6; Temin 2013:116.

¹⁵⁶ Temin 2004:515-6, 537-8; Holleran 2011:178.

¹⁵⁷ Temin 2004:518; Temin 2013:116.

¹⁵⁸ Harris (2013:529) notes that the biggest difference between the Roman economy and modern capitalist economies is that production was most often done in households rather than at a firm. Both economies have markets for goods, capital, land, and labor. Temin (2004:538) emphasizes the link between labor markets and urban areas

difference between the two would be the presence of the slave system, but since slaves are unable to change locations, they are not part of the labor market; however, they do influence the outcomes of the market for other workers in Rome.

Both of these ways to highlight the relationship and the similarities, even basic ones, between modern and ancient economies are important for overcoming the preconception that the two time periods are so drastically different that comparing them is ineffective. Essentially, these methods are attempting to verify that an analysis of the labor market and different groups' outcomes in Rome can be understood and interpreted in terms of economic principles, namely in a model of evaluating change in a labor market due to migration. Migration of different groups of people including slaves, soldiers, professionals, artisans, farmers, craftsmen, and politicians are attested to in large volumes in both economies, so studying the impact of migration should not be so different even though the context of those economies are not the same.

Another consideration for this study is that applying a model to a phenomenon theoretically is nearly as important as the empirical analysis using sample data for economists. While empirical analysis would be the most definitive method for estimating actual impact, a theoretical analysis will provide the likely impact or the magnitude of possible impacts on, for example, the labor market. In this case, if we understand the same underlying assumptions as valid for each economy's labor market, the theory will apply roughly the same to each, such that we can equate the Roman economy with the principles of a modern economy. The theoretical approach is good and helpful in itself, and in fact economists need to explain how it applies in the context they are studying before the empirical analysis can be done. On the one hand, the empirics have the advantage of expressing how the theoretical model matches the actual results

and supports the idea that Rome had a labor market, although the idea remains speculative due to limited but persuasive evidence.

that occur in the market. Still, the theory is important because it predicts the direction of the results.

Describing the Assumptions of the Migration Model and How It Can Apply to Rome

The intent for my study is to proceed with the assumption not that the two economies in question are the same or very similar in many ways, but rather that the labor markets, as one specific part of an economy, in each function similarly in theory. Firstly, this means that the labor groups within an economy can be identified as separate groups and studied to see how changes in one group impact the others. Second, the assumptions behind the model can be transferred or estimated to have existed to some degree in the Roman economy; and so, the migration model can be used for the Roman labor market to observe the effects of migration in understandable terms. Moreover, comparing Rome, a big and still growing urban center for production, business, and politics in the Late Republic, to many developing urban cities today is not too much of a stretch. Both have distinctive, urban labor markets that naturally separate people by skill and/or education, and while the markets could be specific to an area, they could still draw in non-locals for any number of reasons.

The economic model that seems best suited for an analysis at the aggregate level such as the urban center of Rome is the demand and supply theory of migration. Its context is in the neo-classical school of economic thought, and in it, the fundamental assumption is that workers pursue economic gains (i.e. higher wages), better labor markets, and better working conditions until there is no incentive to move anymore.¹⁵⁹ Typically, this shows that people move from areas of low income to high income.¹⁶⁰ In general, Rome was home to many elites and many

¹⁵⁹ Mitze 2015:64-5.

¹⁶⁰ Mitze 2015:71.

businesses, on account of which it was perceived as an area of relatively higher income than rural areas.¹⁶¹ With this in mind then, the demand and supply theory of migration involves modeling the demand for and the supply of labor on a graph in terms of the amount of employment (on the x-axis) at increasing wage rates (on the y-axis). Much like any supply and demand model in economics, once the parameters of the model are established, different exogenous changes can be introduced, and their impacts on supply and demand can be estimated and analyzed. In the current study, the main change that is focused on is the migration of people into Rome's labor market.

In the demand and supply model, there are a few important assumptions to understand beforehand. The first is that labor is homogenous, which means the workers are all the same, and so, secondly, immigrants to the labor market can be perfect substitutes for the native born workers (in this case, the urban residents of Rome).¹⁶² Third, in the short run, immigration affects the labor supply (e.g. workers) but not the labor demanded (e.g. by employers or businesses).¹⁶³ Lastly, the quality and quantity of native born workers does not change after the inflow of immigrants. The most tenuous of these would be the first and second assumptions. The first is a simplification of reality, in which we know that all workers are different to each other, but it keeps the model limited in scope and so more straightforward for analysis. A way to work around this issue is to separate the analysis by skill level and within skill level by native or migrant status. The second is harder to work around, mostly because anecdotal evidence does not describe many migrants at a time or even migrants overall regarding their skill level when coming to Rome. At the same time, assuming that most migrants could match their skill level

¹⁶¹ Holleran 2011:164-5, 178.

¹⁶² Borjas 2013:2-4; Del Carpio 2015:508. Borjas (2013:14-5) also discusses the implications of a situation in which immigrants and native workers are imperfect substitutes.

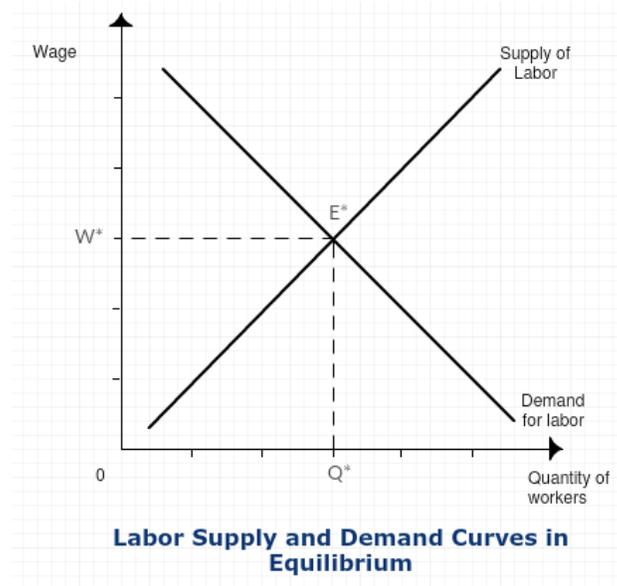
¹⁶³ Borjas 2013:6-7. Borjas points out that, although this is the assumption, it ignores the fact that immigrants increase the demand for goods, which would increase the labor demanded to produce more goods.

with the required skill level at one or more potential job makes sense. While these assumptions do not fit the real labor market perfectly, they are important for putting reality into a simplified model where we can estimate the trends and changes due to some shock that influences the supply or demand inside the model.

Applying the Migration Model to the Labor Market in Rome

With this understanding of the model, the next step in this study is to describe the model in terms of the city of Rome and its inhabitants and then to introduce migration. The inputs for the model are the supply of workers and the wages they demand as well as the demand for workers and the wages employers offer. These inputs are then translated into their corresponding representation in a graph with the labor supply as a positive, upward sloping line and labor demanded as a negative, downward sloping line. While the model generalizes the wage rate and level of employment for all people in an equilibrium state where supply meets demand, in reality there would be variation within the wage rates, within industries, and depending on skill level. From this equilibrium where the labor market is at rest, we get the “average” wage rate and the estimated number of people employed where the supply meets demand (i.e. where transactions that meet both the workers’ and employers’ needs are fulfilled). This equilibrium point represents the labor market in the pre-migration period at the aggregate level in the theoretical model (see E^* on Figure 1). Moving to the left or right of this point on the graph would represent either a surplus of labor or a surplus of jobs, while shifting the supply or demand curve due to some shock would shift the equilibrium point to different values of the wage rate and employment level.

Figure 1.



As discussed in the previous chapter, migrants can fit into a large variety of urban jobs depending in part on their skill level. Upper class citizens with wealth and a good reputation can get involved in the political sphere, in business or banking, or in managing the production of goods or services. Sub-elites and professionals like doctors, teachers, and certain craftsmen could find a job opportunity with the help of their peers or a patron. Other migrants of lower skill could work in a trade, be merchants, work in a tavern or inn, help with any building or repair projects, work on the docks, or transport goods within the city.¹⁶⁴ While these voluntary migrants represented a fraction of newcomers to Rome, forced migrants (i.e. slaves) made up a majority of new workers in Rome in domestic production and the in-house accountants or secretaries for their master.¹⁶⁵ Often slaves with high levels of skill and success could be manumitted and continue in the master's business with new independence and even an increase in wages.¹⁶⁶ The variety of jobs attracted many to Rome, but immigration may have had different effects on the

¹⁶⁴ Holleran (2011:170-2) talks in depth about the sources of work in transporting goods and construction in Rome.

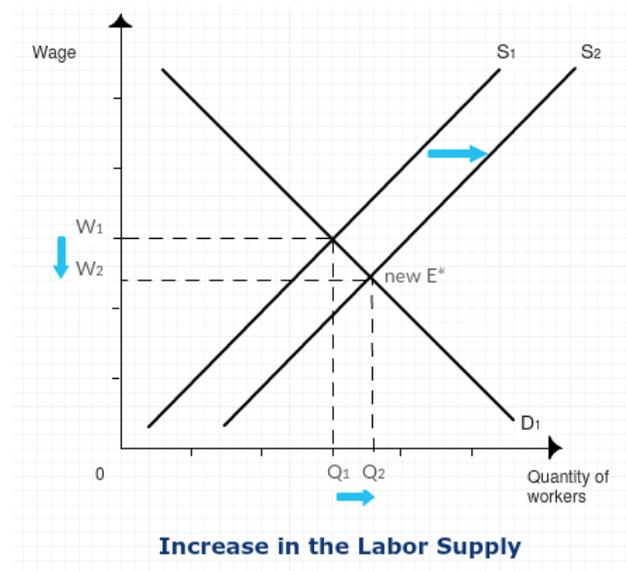
¹⁶⁵ On the preference for slave labor in households, see Holleran (2011:166-168).

¹⁶⁶ Holleran (2011:168) discusses the possible opportunities for freedmen in their previous master's house.

skill level groups, with most migrants falling into unskilled jobs if they failed to match their skills to the corresponding urban job.¹⁶⁷

Migration, first at the aggregate level, presents an exogenous shock to the model of supply and demand and affects primarily the supply curve. The influx of new workers to Rome increases the supply of workers overall and shifts the supply curve to the right. This means that at any wage rate, there are more workers available (see the new supply curve S_2 on Figure 2). However, the equilibrium point shifts as well such that the new point (E^*) where supply and demand meet is at a higher employment level (Q_2) but at a lower wage rate (W_2).¹⁶⁸

Figure 2.



For Rome, this means that more people are working because more people are available to work, even at a lower wage rate, and employers will hire more workers at lower rates. However, with lower wages and more workers, the competition for jobs increases as well.¹⁶⁹ While competition is a burden for workers, employers benefit from it because they can hire cheaper labor in higher

¹⁶⁷ Holleran 2011:175. Holleran (2011:173-4) also gives some alternatives for people who fail to find unemployment in Rome.

¹⁶⁸ Borjas 2003:1337.

¹⁶⁹ Morel 2013:505. Holleran (2011:169) mentions how wages for casual work would have decreased due to more competition among more workers.

quantities with which they can expand their production. These aggregate results reveal some interesting trends in the labor market due to migration, but they mask the significant variation in the effects for each segment of the population.

To address the effects to different groups, the model can be altered to identify one skill group apart from the others, so that when migration is introduced, it is in terms of the one labor group. The usual division of labor is between skilled and unskilled workers. However, Rome was unique in that slaves and freed people could be found in both groups, as could free workers. Generally, freed people tended to be skilled, while slaves could be either skilled or unskilled depending on what they were trained in. Within the aggregate effects of migration, we know that migrants gained employment and they accepted whatever wage rate was offered. Native workers in Rome, though, lost wages since overall wages decreased, which might have led some to leave the labor market (i.e. leave the labor force) or leave the market to become an employer of that cheaper labor.¹⁷⁰ This shows the general trend, but still, altering the model can give a more concrete description.

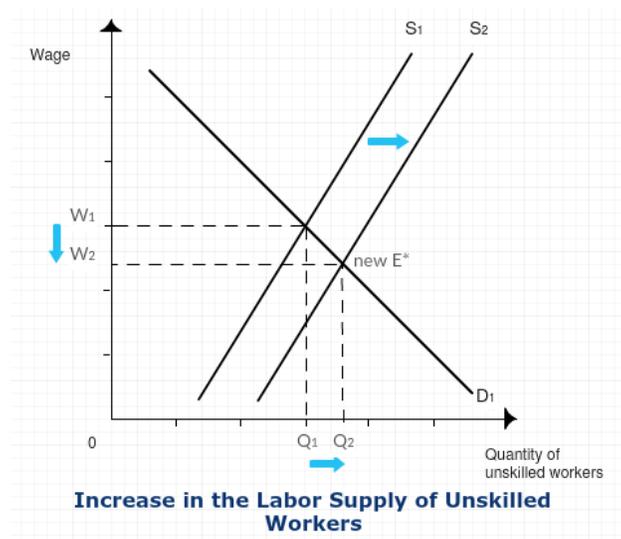
In order to compare skilled and unskilled labor on a more equal level and in a way that shows the maximum possible change in wage and employment levels, we can assume that workers tend to work at any wage rate offered, rather than be unemployed and risk entering poverty.¹⁷¹ The supply curve reflects this by being more inelastic, that is, the supply curve slopes up more steeply (compare S_1 on Figure 3 with previous S_1 s). Then, when we look at the employment level of just unskilled workers, migration shifts their supply curve directly to the right as more unskilled migrant workers come to Rome to join the native workers (see S_2 on Figure 3). Since the demand curve does not change, the equilibrium point simply moves down

¹⁷⁰ Borjas 2003:1337.

¹⁷¹ Holleran (2011:166) states “the majority of people in Rome had to work to support themselves,” which is also the case for many urban cities today.

the demand curve (E^*). The result is that the number of unskilled workers employed increases (Q_2) while the wage rate decreases for both natives and migrants (W_2).¹⁷²

Figure 3.



Moreover, employers gain from access to cheaper labor, and they are able to expand production, which requires more unskilled but also more skilled labor. When evaluating migration on just unskilled labor, migrants in this category gain employment while natives see their wages decrease.¹⁷³ At the same time, the demand for skilled workers increases.¹⁷⁴

The increased demand for skilled workers, then, impacts the labor market for skilled laborers by themselves. While the more inelastic supply curve remains the same or, at least, increases slightly as some skilled migrants enter Rome, the demand curve for skilled labor shifts up as demand increases (see D_2 on Figure 4).¹⁷⁵

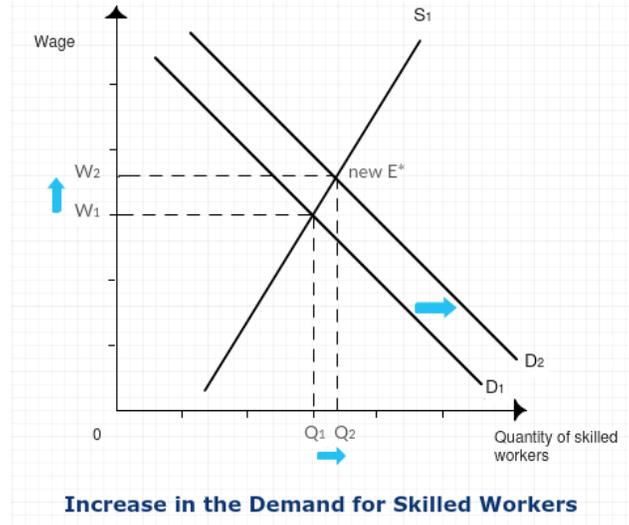
¹⁷² Holleran (2011:169) alludes to this relationship between unskilled workers and their low wages.

¹⁷³ Borjas 2013:1.

¹⁷⁴ Del Carpio 2015:508.

¹⁷⁵ Borjas 2013:1.

Figure 4.



As a result, employers needing more skilled labor are willing to pay workers more, such that the wage rate for skilled labor increases as employers try to attract those workers (W_2). An example of an increase in pay for a skilled worker could be a slave that is manumitted and given a wage by the master to remain in his household doing the same type of work or managing the business.¹⁷⁶ Alternately, employers of free urban residents could pay a higher wage to someone with a desirable skill or work experience. These skilled workers enjoy benefits from migration, while unskilled workers tend to lose because of it, either from decreased wages or leaving the labor force.

Taking slaves into account for either unskilled or skilled labor is more difficult. When brought into a master's house for the first time, a slave may be unskilled or perhaps skilled but not in anything useful to the master. A slave would earn little to no wage; to the master, that is a benefit since he already paid a high price for the slave's future output, and that price should be less than the alternative of paying a free person in full every day to work. Over the slave's

¹⁷⁶ Joshel (2010:44-6) describes how the relationship between ex-slave and patron was expected to continue after manumission and provide similar labor benefits to the patron's business.

lifetime, though, he or she would be trained in household work or in the work required to maintain the master's business, at which point they would transition into the skilled labor category. Presumably the cost of training a slave in skilled labor would have been less than hiring a free skilled laborer, and the master can gain almost all of the profit from the slave's output. As a greater volume of slaves was imported into Rome each year to be traded during the Late Republic and early 1st century AD, many of those slaves increased the urban slave population. However, as these slaves were utilized for cheap long-term labor, free urban residents who often were daily laborers had to compete for the remaining jobs that slaves did not typically fill.¹⁷⁷ This competition would have driven the wage rate for these workers down, but they would have had to accept a lower rate in order to be employed and reduce the risk of poverty.¹⁷⁸ This could also have increased the urban poor population of unemployed or occasionally employed people.¹⁷⁹ On the other hand, skilled workers did not experience this increase in competition, and their wages would have been unchanged. Being unaffected by immigration in these ways made the long-term or consistent jobs that these skilled workers had more desirable, and hired or daily labor was seen as the least desirable.¹⁸⁰ Slaves, then, benefitted economically from slavery in that they could learn skills and they had the potential to progress to more skilled jobs at the master's house depending on their performance. This could also increase their chances of manumission, gaining citizenship, and/or holding managerial positions in the master's house.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Noy (2000:88) discusses how free migrants who were unskilled and lacked capital for a business had a harder time competing with slaves. See also Holleran (2011:166-8) for discussion of how free urban residents could find work in Rome, and (2011:175-6) how it was likely that unemployed migrants added to the poor population.

¹⁷⁸ Holleran 2011:167.

¹⁷⁹ Holleran 2011:173-5.

¹⁸⁰ Treggiari (1980:49-50) mentions that hired laborers ranked lower than business owners and people with a fixed salary for their effort; selling out their labor limits peoples' freedom. Harris (2013:528) and Joshel (2010:166) notes how upper class authors often equated hired wage laborers with slaves.

¹⁸¹ Temin (2013:126-7) describes how manumission was "common" and "surviving records attest to its frequency."

To think that slaves had some benefit from their position in slavery seems unconventional. Their free counterparts in the city probably struggled to find employment as hired workers or temporary construction or port laborers. Being unskilled made these people desperate for work, and they may have come close to poverty at times, especially the migrants in this group.¹⁸² Skilled laborers, though, were better able to fit into trades or professions since they would have some means to verify their skillset. Migrants with verified skills would be able to assimilate better and find more stable jobs than those without skills, and having networks or references with people already in Rome would have helped too. While slaves did not have the freedom to change jobs or location, they did have a similar type of stable job where work was guaranteed, and they had the possibility to advance as they became more skilled. However, the comparison of slaves to the free unskilled residents of Rome is striking, because the latter were in the labor group that lost wages because of slave immigration and had to compete for jobs in the market more than before.

As a result, it appears that both slaves while they are slaves and slaves turned into freedmen may have, in some ways, been better off economically and socially than the free urban unskilled population of Rome. Often we assume that slaves fared worse economically while slaves than any other social group, due in part to our connotations with their social status, lack of personal freedom, and unethical treatment from the moment of being forced into slavery. While these serious issues should be in our minds at all times, we can recognize that in some ways slaves gained economically from having a stable job, housing, and opportunity for advancement through a diligent work ethic.¹⁸³ Slaves not only had short term but also long term economic benefits like learning many types of work and skillsets, having a free Roman citizen vouch for

¹⁸² Holleran 2011:175, 177.

¹⁸³ Temin (2013:127-8) explains how the hope of being manumitted, as well as seeing the examples of successful freedmen, was a huge incentive for slaves to cooperate with their master and meet expectations.

their work experience, and often being given a permanent position as a manager of their master's business upon manumission.¹⁸⁴ For social benefits, most significantly, slaves were granted citizenship upon manumission, which made them both legally and socially the same as free Roman citizens.¹⁸⁵ Freedmen were seen and treated as such by other social groups, which shows just how being a citizen changes people's perspectives. Also, they were allowed to marry and have a family, and there are records of freedmen marrying widows whose previous husbands were free citizens.¹⁸⁶ Overall, it is not hard to see how these benefits outweighed many of the struggles that unskilled migrants in Rome faced, even if one does not typically see slavery as having any benefits to the slave on account of their lack of personal freedom.

Conclusion

After examining the underlying similarities between ancient Rome and modern cities, it is clear that the labor market in Rome can effectively be studied in terms of an economic model. This study of Roman workers helps us compare the effects of migration for different labor groups. The ancient city of Rome and modern cities are separated by many centuries, but their concepts of labor markets are not so different and may have even functioned similarly. Applying a model for the effects of migration on the economy's labor market is possible and quite helpful for showing how a city with no reliable demographic data, like Rome, has so much information

¹⁸⁴ Temin (2013:129) mentions that Roman slaves could be, and often were, educated by their owners to increase their value in the short term for the owner and in the long term for the slave. Joshel (2010:44-6) describes how the ex-slaves were expected to continue working for and with their patron after manumission and provide similar labor benefits to the patron's business as when they were a slave.

¹⁸⁵ Bradley (1994:155) states that there was both formal and informal manumission, where in the former, slaves gained full citizenship, and in the latter, they enjoyed freedom from slavery but not citizenship. Joshel (2010:42), on the other hand, argues that the slave association remained with freedmen and was "a social stigma", and slaves were expected to keep a relationship with their former owner.

¹⁸⁶ Bradley (1994:50) acknowledges that slaves were not allowed to marry, but they did enter contract unions (*contubernia*) that are practically marriages. Slaver owners would allow these unions, anticipating any children from it to be new slaves.

to reveal to us. Free urban residents in Rome faced an oversaturated labor market and depressed wages as slaves took over some of their job functions. Moreover, slaves did have some benefits over the course of their life, the most important of which was hope for manumission and the complete reversal of their social position in slavery. Economically, freedmen could run a business with help from their master since they had the skills and a close relationship with their master. Socially, freedmen were full Roman citizens and were treated as such, and they enjoyed the freedom to earn money and have a family. The range of these benefits, while at the expense of personal freedom, far outweighed the conditions in which the free unskilled urban population lived.

Conclusion

How Migration to Rome Helps Us Understand the Labor Market Conditions

Rome was already one of the biggest and economically developed cities in the ancient world. By the 1st century BC, there were an estimated 1 million inhabitants in the city alone, requiring a major labor market for residents and new immigrants alike. To assess the impact of immigration on the labor market, a proper understanding of the state of the labor market in Rome in the Late Republic is necessary. While many scholars give a brief summary or select examples of workers in Rome, this study is unique in that it gives a more complete account of workers of different social status and skill level and includes where migrants could be found within those categories. We know that a majority of Roman laborers were slaves, who filled domestic production needs, and relatively unskilled workers, who filled most other needs for daily labor. A smaller portion of workers consisted of craftsmen, professionals, teachers, and doctors, and the remaining portion were the elite and sub-elite business financiers or production managers. Rome held a mix of citizens and non-citizens, who had to find their way in the city with limited legal rights. Both legal status and social status factored heavily into how individuals were perceived, such that foreign slaves or free persons were counted among the lowest in society, and free urban residents, especially upper class citizens, had the ideal position. However, slaves given citizenship after manumission were able to enjoy more of the privileges of free people, such as managing or owning a business and getting married.

Migrants faced a variety of opportunities and challenges entering this society where the social order can either help or hurt them. Migrants with valuable skills and connections within the city were better able to assimilate into urban life. These migrants are perhaps hard to account

for in historical records because they assimilated so well and were able to find a niche in the labor market. On the other hand, unskilled migrants entered into an increasingly competitive labor market since slaves were favored as cheap labor and employers may have been paying their daily laborers less as a result. Moreover, slaves were utilized at higher rates through the Late Republic and 1st century AD, fueling the displacement of daily workers. Roman military conquests provided a consistent source of slaves, but children born to slaves and exposed children who were then sold into slavery contributed to the numbers of new slaves each year. One scholar, David Noy, estimated that 10,000 new immigrants to Rome alone were needed each year to grow the population, which helped the city reach 1 million inhabitants by the time of Augustus.¹⁸⁷

Given not only the size of Rome but also its similarities to modern labor markets that allow workers and employers to seek optimal transactions, we can acknowledge that Rome had its own urban labor market. In this market, the supply of labor met with the demand for laborers, and production in Rome flourished, with the help of migrants no less. Migrants in the Roman labor market had mixed effects on individual labor groups, as seen through the analysis of the demand and supply theory of migration used in economics. Unskilled migrants increased the competition between all unskilled urban residents, especially as slaves took away more jobs in household and administrative functions. While unskilled workers overall experienced decreased wages, skilled workers could have had some benefits from migration like an increase in wages due to increased demand for their work. Lastly, slaves once skilled in production or finance could achieve freedom from slavery and gain citizenship, depending on many factors, and often they managed or contributed heavily to their former owner's business. In these respects, slaves

¹⁸⁷ Noy 2000:19; Morley 1996:44.

and freedmen had considerable benefits from slavery economically and socially, however unconventional that may sound, but at the expense of their personal freedom.

This thesis has three main contributions to related scholarly work, and all three reveal a deeper understanding of the city of Rome and its inhabitants than previous work on labor and slavery in Rome. First, this study gives a more thorough description of the various types of labor and their associated social status than most scholars. While there is extensive work on slavery alone or free immigrants to Rome, there lacks a concurrent and detailed study of both types of migrants that creates a comprehensive image of labor in Rome. Secondly, applying an economic model based on the principles of labor markets is not common, but this study shows how it can be done and it can reveal some important comparisons among the labor groups in Rome. The model attempts to convey the likely dynamic in the labor market and how that dynamic can change because of the migration of workers into a new labor market. Lastly, the results from analyzing the model and variations on its parameters reveal something new about slaves and ex-slaves. While slaves seem very disadvantaged by their position in slavery and lack of freedom, this study suggests that slaves had a constant source of work and basic food and shelter available to them, whereas unskilled free persons often struggled to meet both needs over their lifetime, all the while being completely free. Slaves who were manumitted due to their skill and their master's benevolence gained economic and social freedom and often citizenship, which made them nearly equal to any free, skilled citizen in Rome. These freedmen may have even risen above their free skilled counterpart if their former owner gave them a managerial position in their business, which is why we see many successful and distinguished freedmen recorded in epigraphic evidence.

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