

# War, destruction, and regeneration in the Middle Ebro valley (1st century BCE) : the foundation of the Colonia Caesar Augusta and its irrigation programmes

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## IV

FRANCISCO BELTRÁN LLORIS

### WAR, DESTRUCTION, AND REGENERATION IN THE MIDDLE EBRO VALLEY (1<sup>st</sup> CENTURY BCE)

THE FOUNDATION OF THE *COLONIA CAESAR AVGUSTA* AND  
ITS IRRIGATION PROGRAMMES

#### 1. Beneficial colonies, catastrophic colonies...

*Sed coloniarum alia necessitudo est; non enim ueniunt extrinsecus in ciuitatem nec suis radicibus nituntur, sed ex ciuitate quasi propagatae sunt et iura institutaque omnia populi Romani, non sui arbitrii, habent. Quae tamen condicio, cum sit magis obnoxia et minus libera, potior tamen et praestabilior existimatur propter amplitudinem maiestatemque populi Romani, cuius istae coloniae quasi effigies paruae simulacraque esse quaedam uidentur, et simul quia obscura oblitterataque sunt municipiorum iura, quibus uti iam per innotitiam non queunt.*<sup>1</sup>

Aulus Gellius' oft-quoted passage on the Roman colonies exactly expresses the reason why these communities enjoyed such an elevated and prestigious position in that galaxy of competing cities that made up the Roman Empire. The colonies were little Romes, cities springing directly from the capital of the world, *effigies paruae simulacraque* of the Roman people. For this reason, when describing the Empire, Pliny the Elder discusses them much more exhaustively than any other category of

<sup>1</sup> GELL. *NA* 16, 13, 4.

city, including *municipia*, of which he only gives a selection.<sup>2</sup> In this he imitated, the naturalist claimed, the approach taken in the *discriptio Italiae* by Augustus, that princeps whose *Res gestae* demonstrated his appreciation for the colonies, making various references to them,<sup>3</sup> some of which were infused with an unmistakable pride: *Italia autem XXVIII colonias, quae uiuo me celeberrimae et frequentissimae fuerunt mea auctoritate deductas habet.*<sup>4</sup>

This ancient perception, of which many more examples may be cited, was inherited by nineteenth century historiography, which identified with the Roman Empire and projected European imperial aspirations onto it. In doing so, they transformed the colonies into one of the principal indicators for establishing various provinces' relative degree of 'Romanness', and gave them a starring role in the narrative of Roman expansion — a narrative that naturally adopted a unilaterally Romano-centric perspective and silenced almost entirely the provincials' point of view. A good example of this historiographic position is the words with which E.T. Salmon closed his major 1969 study of the subject. In his opinion, the colonies would have been for Rome "the sinews of her civilizing power" and would have given her an instrument with which "to maintain law, order and the Pax Romana": ultimately, and assigning to him E. Kornemann's categorical statement in 1901, the history of the Roman colonies would be the history of the Roman state itself.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly, this perspective is not sustainable in modern scholarship: from the 1960s and 1970s, Roman expansion and Romanisation have been perceived no longer as a one-way phenomenon but instead have been understood as a reciprocal process, in which the provinces' contribution played a fundamental role.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> PLIN. *NH* 3, 46; F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2007c) 126.

<sup>3</sup> *RGDA* 3, 1; 15, 3; 16, 1; 21, 3; 28, 1-2; 35, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *RGDA* 28, 2.

<sup>5</sup> SALMON (1969) 157; KORNEMANN (1901) 560.

<sup>6</sup> I have discussed on several occasions the usefulness of the concept of Romanisation, once it has been revised and divested of its imperialist and

Nevertheless, more recent critical studies not only have disagreed with the unilateral perception that ignores provincial voices, but also have started to question — in somewhat deconstructive terms — whether the foundation of colonies may be understood as a coherent Roman practice.<sup>7</sup> Or, conversely, whether it should simply be treated as a “set of terms applied in different periods to different modes of exercising power over land and people”.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately for the challenge to unilateralism, the Roman sources rarely report the provincial populations’ perceptions — obviously negative — of the establishment of a colony in their territory, an act which in principle would dispossess the local population of their city and land for the benefit of others and which quite often was a form of punishment. An example of one of those rare testimonies is provided in Cicero’s letters which document Atticus’ fruitless endeavours to avoid Caesar’s plan to found a colony in *Buthrotum* (Butrint, Albania), a city in which Atticus owned property and whose inhabitants, understandably, saw the initiative as a threat.<sup>9</sup> This is precisely the standpoint that several recent studies have taken in their attempt to address the question, proposing a change of perspective in which colonies, far from being those beneficial instruments of civilising Roman power, were instead a genuine catastrophe for the local population.<sup>10</sup>

It is very clear — as it was already to traditional historiography<sup>11</sup> — that over the centuries, Roman (and Latin) colonies

Romano-centric paraphernalia, alongside the opinion expressed by other authors, such as KEAY / TERRENATO (2001) ix-xii or ALFÖLDY (2005) 25-56: see F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (1999); (2003) and (forthcoming b).

<sup>7</sup> See SWEETMAN (2011) 1.

<sup>8</sup> BISPHAM (2006) 110-111.

<sup>9</sup> CIC. *Att.* 16, 16a, see HANSEN (2011) 90.

<sup>10</sup> WOOLF (2011); for instance: “Mass colonization represents a sudden intervention superimposed on these background patterns and secular trends. This kind of sudden change is appropriately described as catastrophic, hence my title”.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, SALMON (1969) 157: “For well over half a millennium of changing vicissitudes the *coloniae* had done yeoman service. Though all their changes of purpose, size and constitution ...”.

were established in a multitude of contexts and developed along very different trajectories. In fact, Roman colonisation in Hispania provides a good example of this diversity:<sup>12</sup> from republican Latin colonies such as *Carteia* (Algeciras) or *Valentia* (Valencia),<sup>13</sup> via the massive interventions of Caesar and Augustus, to late examples such as the elevation to colonial status of *Italica* (Santiponce), Hadrian's birthplace.<sup>14</sup> A study that differentiates among the distinct colonial practices that developed in Italy and the provinces from the Republican period to the Severans thus undoubtedly constitutes a sound topic for research,<sup>15</sup> which would make it possible to render the stereotypes more nuanced and determine the different contexts and historical developments of the colonial foundations. For example, *Carteia*, the first Latin colony established outside the Italian peninsula, in 171 BCE, completely breaks the colonial stereotype since it did not involve the transfer of population from Italy, nor did it affect Roman citizens, nor involve the creation of an entirely new city.<sup>16</sup>

While it is important to refine the classical perception of the colonies from a provincial perspective and to assume diversity of the colonial phenomenon throughout the centuries, this should not lead to the conclusion that the category of 'colony' in itself is an ancient construct of no interest to the modern historian. Certainly, enjoying a colonial statute did not necessarily guarantee success for a city,<sup>17</sup> but it is no less certain that

<sup>12</sup> Besides the study by VITTINGHOFF (1952); for Hispania see GALSTERER (1971); MARÍN DÍAZ (1988) or ABASCAL / ESPINOSA (1989).

<sup>13</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2011c).

<sup>14</sup> See the recent synthesis by CABALLOS RUFINO (2010).

<sup>15</sup> Thus, WOOLF (2011) 154.

<sup>16</sup> LIV. 43, 1, 4; F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2011c) 133-137: the colony was founded to accommodate the children born to Roman soldiers and Hispanian mothers with whom they did not have *conubium*, who already lived in Hispania and were settled in a pre-existing city. Its urban centre underwent no notable transformations during its first decades of existence, and its previous inhabitants, Punics, were included among the colonists, if they wished to be.

<sup>17</sup> Thus, WOOLF (2011) 155: "The only conclusion possible is that colonial status alone was not a key determinant of future success" The case of *Celsa*, which will be discussed below, is a good illustration of this point.

many colonies did manage to play a significant role in the heart of their provinces. In many cases, above all in the western provinces, this privileged position was connected to the initial support received from the *principes* who founded them (although some scholars disagree with this thesis),<sup>18</sup> thanks to substantial investment, the allocation of administrative roles which consolidated them as regional centres, or the funding of large productive infrastructures — for example, of irrigation — which entailed important innovations in agricultural production.

A good example of all that is the case upon which this paper will focus, *colonia Caesar Augusta*, the city founded by Augustus on the site of modern-day Zaragoza around 14 BCE,<sup>19</sup> which could scarcely be interpreted from a regional perspective as a ‘catastrophic’ event.

To understand the organising and even regenerating role played by *Caesar Augusta* in the region of the Middle Ebro Valley, previous exploration of a range of aspects is crucial: the devastating effects that the wars of the first century BCE had upon some areas; the policy changes surrounding the foundation and promotion of cities during the Caesarian and Augustan periods; and, finally, the vast expanse of colonial land allotted to *Caesar Augusta*. All of these questions I have written about elsewhere, so in this paper I shall limit myself to summarising some of the information or observations necessary to develop the main argument.

Once these issues have been reviewed, the final part of this paper will evaluate both the nature of the imperial interventions that accompanied the institution of this colony, as well as the effects these interventions had on the life of the colony. My focus will be on the inequalities created in the urban system through the favourable treatment of some *coloniae* by the emperors. In

<sup>18</sup> A dissenting voice is provided by WOOLF (2011) 153-156, in whose opinion the emperors do not seem to have favoured the colonies above other types of city (156), nor do the colonies appear to be associated with the spread of irrigation techniques (153).

<sup>19</sup> The last synthesis on the city: F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2007a).

particular, I will look at the large-scale works and infrastructure related to irrigation, which created unequal opportunities of exploitation in the area.

## 2. War and devastation in the Middle Ebro Valley: the civil wars of the first century BCE (Pl. 4.1)

The end of the most virulent phase of the Celtiberian and Lusitanian Wars around the end of the second century BCE by no means ushered in a period of peace in the Iberian Peninsula. In fact, notwithstanding the scarcity of sources available for this period, there are still signs of significant military operations in the region:<sup>20</sup> for example, in 104 there are indications that the Celtiberians repulsed an incursion of Cimbri, who had crossed the Pyrenees after devastating the south of Gaul,<sup>21</sup> and in the 90s and 80s, triumphs are documented for the governors of Hispania, T. Didius and C. Valerius Flaccus, in both instances *de Celtiberis*.<sup>22</sup> Above all during the 70s, and again in the 40s, however, war became a constant in provincial life because the civil conflicts that blighted Rome during these years were exported to Hispania: this was especially true of the wars between Sertorius and the senatorial forces led by Caecilius Metellus and Pompey the Great, and the confrontations between the Caesarian and Pompeian armies.<sup>23</sup>

Without discussing the details of these conflicts, it is sufficient to highlight that some areas of the Middle Ebro Valley were profoundly affected by some military operations that — especially during the Sertorian War — caused damage to arable lands, sieges and destructions of cities, depopulation, and, in some cases, lasting devastation. Although the literary sources only

<sup>20</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / MARTÍN-BUENO / PINA POLO (2000) 31.

<sup>21</sup> LIV. *Per.* 67.

<sup>22</sup> *Acta triumph.* ad 93 and 81.

<sup>23</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / MARTÍN-BUENO / PINA POLO (2000) 31-37.

recount some destructive episodes, the archaeological record exposes the magnitude of the havoc caused in areas such as those situated along the southern course of the Middle Ebro Valley.<sup>24</sup>

The ancient sources mention episodes of conflict that affected cities such as *Calagurris* (modern Calahorra), *Contrebia* — whether that be *Contrebia Leucada* (Inestrillas, La Rioja) or *Contrebia Belaisca* (Botorrita, Zaragoza) — *Vareia* (Logroño), *Bursao* (Borja), *Cascantum* (Cascante), *Gracchurris* (Alfaro), *Belgeda* (whose location remains unidentified), *Bilbilis* (Calatayud) or *Osca* (Huesca), the city which Sertorius made his ‘capital’, to name but a few.<sup>25</sup> By contrast, the confrontation between Caesarian and Pompeyan troops, in which the battle near *Ilerda* (Lérida) in 49 BCE was a crucial episode, does not appear to have been as destructive.

Many of these cities survived the wars of the first century BCE, but others perished, as a review of the archaeological records makes clear. These expose a truly astonishing roll call of settlements, which not only suffered destruction, but which were also abandoned by their populations in this period; it is not possible to discuss here whether these effects are entirely due to the Sertorian Wars, or if other military conflicts also contributed.<sup>26</sup>

Among the settlements of urban status that archaeological evidence suggests were abandoned during the first century BCE, almost all during the first half of the century, are included from west to east: El Convento (Mallén), Valdetaus (Tauste, north of the Ebro), possibly La Tijera (Urrea de Jalón), *Contrebia Belaisca* (Botorrita), El Piquete de la Atalaya (Azuara), Valdeherrera (Calatayud), La Cabañeta (El Burgo de Ebro), Los Castellazos (Mediana de Aragón), La Corona (Fuentes de Ebro), El Cabezo de Alcalá (Azaila), El Castillejo de la Romana (La

<sup>24</sup> On the Sertorian War, GARCÍA MORA (1991), or more succinctly BARRANDON (2011) 213.

<sup>25</sup> Literary sources on the Sertorian War were compiled by SCHULTEN (1937).

<sup>26</sup> There is something of a controversy surrounding the date some of these settlements were destroyed: see BARRANDON (2011) 231.

Puebla de Híjar), El Tiro de Cañón (Alcañiz) and La Caridad (Caminreal), to which have to be added layers of destruction evident in *Bursao* (Borja), *Oscá* (Huesca), La Guardia (Alcorisa), El Palomar (Oliete), ...<sup>27</sup>

The price of these destructions was particularly pronounced in the areas situated to the south of the Ebro: in an approximately rectangular area of around 100 × 50 km, bordered by the Huecha River to the west, the Ebro River to the north, the Aguasvivas River to the east and an imaginary line parallel to the Ebro up to the hills of Cariñena, the majority of the attested urban centres perished — nine in total. There are a very few exceptions: *Salduie* (Zaragoza) has signs of urban life in the middle of the first century BCE; probably *Kelse* (near Velilla de Ebro), on the left bank of the Ebro, which judging by its coinage survived until the Caesarian period; and possibly *Alauo*, for which there is no archaeological data, as it has still not been reliably located, although there is agreement that it was situated near Alagón.

Obviously, despite the abandonment of these cities, it is difficult to accept that an area of around 5000 km<sup>2</sup> was completely depopulated, even though a large part of that area had not been densely populated due to its poor agricultural quality (the mainly gypsum soil is saline, and the climatic conditions are predominantly arid).<sup>28</sup> In fact, beyond the floodplains of the few tributaries flowing into the right bank of the Ebro (Huecha, Jalón, Huerva and Aguas Vivas), agricultural exploitation was very limited, indicated by the distribution of principal population centres attested in the first century BCE. It is, however, reasonable to assume the continued existence of rural communities on the floodplains of the tributaries and in the areas more suited to agricultural production, with scattered habitations or small settlements that have not left a clear archaeological footprint. What is indeed clear, judging from that same archaeological record,

<sup>27</sup> M. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2002) 47-53; ASENSIO ESTEBAN (1995).

<sup>28</sup> SORIANO JIMÉNEZ (2011).

is that the urban network remained profoundly damaged and unstructured for several decades.

The scale of the destruction suffered during the first century BCE by the principal settlements in these areas situated south of the Ebro is a subject that has not, until very recently, received sufficient attention.<sup>29</sup> It does, however, lead to a new perspective, both on the policy of creation and promotion of cities in the second half of the first century BCE, as well as on the foundation of the colony of *Caesar Augusta* specifically.

### 3. The policy of creation and promotion of cities under Caesar and Augustus<sup>30</sup>

From this perspective, the foundation of the first Roman city in the Middle Ebro Valley, the *colonia Iulia Victrix Lepida Celsa*, around 44 BCE, makes sense.<sup>31</sup> The establishment of this city, probably conceived by Caesar and executed by Marcus Emilius Lepidus, served above all to reinforce the access route into the interior from *Tarraco*, the provincial capital and also a Caesarian Roman colony. The new colony was connected with the coast by two routes: the first was the road — later called the *via Augusta* — that traversed the province, running between the Ebro and the Pyrenees; the second was the course of the Ebro, the region's main natural communication route, at the mouth of which was *Dertosa* (Tortosa), which Caesar had elevated to the condition of *municipium*, a city that acted as an intermodal port for inland and maritime shipping. The new colony, situated on the left shore of the Ebro, had land and river connections with *Tarraco* and the coast, and was further

<sup>29</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (forthcoming d).

<sup>30</sup> This section is based on F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (forthcoming c).

<sup>31</sup> On this issue, see F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2016). On the site: M. BELTRÁN LLORIS (1983), (1985), (1991), (1997); M. BELTRÁN LLORIS / MOSTALAC CARRILLO / LASHERAS CORRUCHAGA (1984); MOSTALAC CARRILLO / M. BELTRÁN LLORIS (1994); M. BELTRÁN LLORIS *et al.* (1998).

strengthened as a communication centre by the construction of the first permanent bridge over the Ebro. The city was established in the far west of the Iberian territory, outside the areas most affected by the wars of the first half of the century, which extended slightly further to the west and south. The city, therefore, was well situated as an outpost of the Roman penetration into the Middle Ebro Valley, but in a position too far from its centre to become the region's organisational centre.

Significantly, the city did not prosper and was abandoned a century after its foundation, in the 60s CE, in a truly exceptional example of the failure of a Roman colony. Beyond the negative effect that the establishment of *Caesar Augusta* thirty years after its foundation may have had upon it, there has still not been a satisfactory explanation for this event: for instance, the colony of *Metellinum* (Medellín) also suffered the consequences of the foundation of the powerful *Emerita Augusta* (Mérida) in its vicinity, but nevertheless that did not result in its abandonment and disappearance.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, when in 26 BCE the Roman troops, led by the emperor Augustus, crossed the Middle Ebro Valley on their way to the Cantabrian front, the lands situated to the west of *colonia Celsa* must have offered a desolate panorama, with only two active urban centres, *Salduie* and probably *Alauo*, along a stretch of more than 100 km of the Ebro between the Caesarian colony and the cities of *Bursao*, *Cascantum*, and *Turiaso*.

This elucidates why the first measures Augustus took to promote cities in this region affected a series of populations that formed an ellipse around the lands devastated by the wars of the first century BCE and which, according to all the evidence — above all numismatic<sup>33</sup> — were transformed into Roman *municipia* in the 20s BCE: *Ilerda* (modern Lérida), *Oscá* (Huesca), *Turiaso* (Tarazona), *Calagurris* (Calahorra) and *Bilbilis* (Calatayud).

<sup>32</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2016).

<sup>33</sup> See the corresponding coin issues in BURNETT / AMANDRY / RIPOLLÈS (1992).

These cities belonged to the three ethnic communities that converged in the region: the Iberians, Vascones and Celtiberians.

Years later, Augustus' intervention in the region was completed with the creation of various Latin *municipia*, neighbouring the Roman *municipia* that had been established some years previously, namely *Graccurris* (modern Alfaro), *Cascantum* (Cascante), *Osicerda* (La Puebla de Híjar / Alcañiz) and the unidentified *Leonica*. The foundation of *Caesar Augusta* in 14 BCE on the site of the Iberian *Salduie*, precisely in the centre of this ellipse of privileged cities, constituted the culmination of a series of acts that it is difficult not to see as the fruits of a certain degree of planning, however much the creation of a *municipium* was not simply a measure decreed by the central power, as we know, but was requested by the provincial communities.

All the land between *Calagurris*, to the west, and *Celsa* and *Osicerda*, to the east, thus formed a *continuum* of privileged communities with Roman and Latin rights that converted this region of Hispania Citerior into one of the most politically integrated areas of the Empire.

#### 4. The *pertica* of Caesar Augusta (Pl. 4.2)

Zaragoza, with an area of 1063 km<sup>2</sup>, is currently one of the largest municipal districts in Spain — the eighth largest by size.<sup>34</sup> Significantly, it shares this circumstance with other cities that are also descended from colonies founded by Augustus and were conventual or provincial capitals, such as Córdoba (ancient *Corduba*, 1255 km<sup>2</sup>), Béja (*Pax Iulia*, 1140 km<sup>2</sup>), Écija (*Astigi*, 978 km<sup>2</sup>) or Mérida (*Emerita Augusta*: 857 km<sup>2</sup>). The considerable extent of Caesaraugustan territory is not a medieval or modern occurrence, but instead can be dated back reliably, using documents dating from the eighth to tenth centuries, to the

<sup>34</sup> <<http://es.classora.com/reports/l104470/ranking-de-los-municipios-mas-extensos-de-espana>>.

Muslim *Saraqosta*, whose district encompassed a radius of 40 km around Zaragoza, including municipalities such as Zuera, Quinto de Ebro, Belchite and Almonacid de la Cuba, Alfamén, Epila and Alagón.<sup>35</sup>

A rich variety of evidence makes it possible to date Zaragoza's impressive territorial expanse back to the constitutive era of the colony. The strongest evidence is provided by the *Lex riui Hiberiensis*, dating from the Hadrianic period, which shows that *pagus Gallorum* was part of the Caesaraugustan *pertica*; the centre of *pagus Gallorum* was in Razazol, near Gallur, a place which has obviously retained its ancient name.<sup>36</sup> Gallur is situated 45 km in a straight line from Zaragoza, and to the west of Alagón, the supposed site of ancient *Alauo*. *Alauo* must have been absorbed by the *colonia Caesar Augusta*, judging by the extent of the three areas centuriated in the Augustan and Tiberian periods to the west of Zaragoza, which extended along the entire right bank of the Ebro between Gallur and Zaragoza.<sup>37</sup>

On its southern limits are two large hydraulic infrastructures which will be discussed later, the dams of Muel on the Huerva River and of Almonacid de la Cuba on the Aguasvivas River. They are both situated in the territory that medieval documents assign to Muslim *Saraqosta* and reliably dated to the Augustan period, and must have been associated with *Caesar Augusta*, as there was no other significant city nearby which they could have serviced. In both cases, secondary settlements are located downstream, which appeared around the start of the Principate and which should be interpreted as Caesaraugustan *uici*: one was situated on the ancient settlement of *Contrebia Belaisca* (Botorrita),<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> On the delimitation of the territory of *Caesar Augusta*, F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2011b) and F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / MAGALLÓN BOTAYA (2007) 104. On the territory of Muslim *Saraqosta*, SOUTO LASALA (1992).

<sup>36</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2006a).

<sup>37</sup> ARIÑO GIL (1990) 43-92; F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / MAGALLÓN BOTAYA (2007) 102-103.

<sup>38</sup> ASENSIO ESTEBAN (1995) 168; the archaeological synthesis provided by MEDRANO MARQUÉS / DÍAZ SANZ (2001) 13-38 is somewhat unclear.

and the other at El Pueyo de Belchite,<sup>39</sup> both were on the floodplains that the dammed water would have made possible to irrigate. It is very likely that the lands of Campo de Cariñena, situated upstream from the Huerva, where it has not been possible to locate any settlement of urban status, would also have been part of the Caesaraugustan territory as far as the Sierra de Algairén. In fact, around the Caesaraugustan territory are many toponyms ending in *-ena*, *-eni*, and *-én*, such as Cariñena, which have traditionally been interpreted as derivations from the names of the proprietors of ancient *fundi* from the Roman period, for example *Boquiñeni*, *Luceni*, *Lucena*, *Leciñena*; this would make sense in areas devoid of urban settlements.<sup>40</sup>

The eastern limits should be set between the courses of the Aguasvivas and Martín Rivers. This may be ascertained by the fact that Quinto de Ebro and Belchite — with the nearby dam of Almonacid de la Cuba — formed part of *Saraqosta*'s territory, as well as by the situation of the urban centre of *Celsa* in Velilla de Ebro, and the possible location of the Latin *municipium Osicerda* between La Puebla de Híjar and Alcañiz.

Less information exists to delimit the northern boundary of the colonial territory, except that Zuera, on the Gállego River, was part of the territory of *Saraqosta*, and that it would probably have been enclosed to the west by the Montes de Castejón and to the east by the Sierra de Alcubierre.

With all the necessary circumspection, the territory of *Caesar Augusta* would thus have incorporated a sizeable area of around 80 km from north to south, between Zuera and Cariñena, and around 90 km from west to east, between Gallur and Quinto de Ebro. Such dimensions should not be a surprise, since there is evidence of contemporary colonial foundations which were

<sup>39</sup> ASENSIO ESTEBAN (1995) 327; current archaeological work has excavated recycled ancient materials, including two Celtiberian inscriptions: RODRÍGUEZ SIMÓN / DÍEZ DE PINOS LÓPEZ (2014); on the site: <<https://www.facebook.com/PueyodeBelchite>>.

<sup>40</sup> FATÁS CABEZA / MARCO (1980); researchers such as MEYER-LÜBKE (1925) 75-76 had already drawn attention to these toponyms of potential Roman origin.

assigned large expanses of territory, such as the case of *Emerita Augusta*<sup>41</sup> whose dimensions reached a diameter of more than a hundred kilometres.<sup>42</sup> It should be added, as previously stated, that a significant proportion of the lands encompassed within the territory hypothetically belonging to *Caesar Augusta* had little agricultural value, because the gypsiferous soils were unsuitable for crop production.

As discussed previously, shortly before the foundation of the colony, the extensive territory of *Caesar Augusta* that has just been delineated had only one or two active urban settlements: *Salduie* and probably *Alauo*. All the others had been destroyed and abandoned in the first half of the first century BCE: Valde-taus (Tauste), on the left bank of the Ebro, La Tijera (Urrea de Jalón) on the Jalón, *Contrebia Belaisca* (Botorrita) on the Huerva, La Cabañeta (El Burgo de Ebro) and La Corona (Fuentes de Ebro) on the right bank of the Ebro, Los Castellazos (Mediana de Aragón), further inland on the Ginel stream, and, on the Aguasvivas, El Piquete de la Atalaya (Azuara), El Cabezo de Alcalá (Azaila) and La Romana (La Zaida). After Augustus founded the colony, some revived, such as Botorrita on the Huerva, and others emerged, such as El Pueyo (Belchite) on the Aguasvivas, and El Razazol (Gallur), the ancient *pagus Gallorum*,<sup>43</sup> among those that have undergone archaeological exploration. The fact that the colony did not inherit the territory of just one

<sup>41</sup> See SÁNCHEZ BARRERO (2004) 101-111 and especially CORDERO RUIZ (2010), which provides an extensive bibliography and a thorough account of the subject. Its dimensions are made clear in the observations of the gromatic Frontinus, which indicate that due to its size, it was not possible to distribute all the land, even after three successive *adsignationes*, initiated at the furthestmost parts of the territory — FRONT. *Contr. agr.* 51-52 (LACHMANN) = AGENN. VRBIC. *Contr. agr.* 83-84 (LACHMANN). Its extent is also illustrated by the size of the *centuriae* which, according to Hyginus, reached the enormous size of 400 *iugera* — HYG. *Lim. grom.* 10-171 (LACHMANN).

<sup>42</sup> In fact, it has been possible to attribute to it maximum axes of c. 90 × 200 km: CORDERO RUIZ (2010) 160, map in fig. 13; the distances have been calculated between Badajoz and Castilblanco, from west to east, and between Puebla de Obando and Ribera del Fresno, from north to south.

<sup>43</sup> M. BELTRÁN LLORIS (1969-1970).

city, but assimilated the lands of various communities, explains why there was no reference in the name of the colony to any previous community, since its territory was made up not by the territory of one city but by the territories of several pre-existing ones. It also explains Strabo's passage that characterises the colony as *synoikismena*, a term whose meaning is debated but which could allude to the city's mixed heritage.<sup>44</sup>

As previously discussed, despite the urban destruction suffered in the first half of the first century BCE, it is unlikely that such an extensive area would have remained entirely depopulated. The question then arises of what the fate may have been of the local populations that remained in the area after the settlement of the new Roman colonists.<sup>45</sup>

## 5. Colonists and *incolae*

The coins struck in *Caesar Augusta* reveal that the colony was founded with veterans of three legions: IV Macedonica, VI Victrix and X Gemina,<sup>46</sup> which together may perhaps have constituted a contingent of around three thousand colonists.<sup>47</sup>

As discussed previously, beyond the continuation of *Salduie* and possibly *Alauo*, it is reasonable to assume that throughout the Caesaraugustan territory there remained groups of peasants in rural settings, as well as the survival of a more or less residual

<sup>44</sup> STRAB. 3, 2, 15; on this, see ARCE (1979), who believes this term is a reference to the mixed character of the colony's population; F. BELTRÁN LLORIS in F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / MAGALLÓN BOTAYA (2007) 101; F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2009a) 62, with an alternative explanation, compatible with the former, which would also imply a reference to the colony's foundation upon the territories of various pre-existing towns.

<sup>45</sup> The issues addressed in the following section have already been discussed in F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (forthcoming d).

<sup>46</sup> As the local coinage testifies: *RPC* 319, 325, 326, 346.

<sup>47</sup> There are no specific data on this subject, but it should be recalled, for example, that according to STRAB. 4, 6, 7, the veterans settled by Augustus in *Augusta Praetoria* numbered three thousand, the same figure as in Carthage (*APP. Pun.* 136).

population in the cities destroyed in the first half of the first century BCE, or their surroundings. The lack of detailed studies on the rural area — which would certainly be very welcome — makes it difficult to get a clear idea of the circumstances of the local population, however.<sup>48</sup> The inhabitants of this area had diverse cultural roots, as has been discussed: Vascones, Iberians and Celtiberians. Among them must also have been people of Italian origin, such as those who had settled in La Cabañeta;<sup>49</sup> there were probably also groups of Roman citizens, such as the descendants of the members of the *Turma Salluitana*, who were rewarded with Roman citizenship in 89 BCE,<sup>50</sup> if they returned to their homes. It is also possible that Italian emigrants settled in the area, such as those Caesar mentioned when discussing the battle of *Ilerda* in 49 BCE, among whom were Romans of all statuses.<sup>51</sup> Although we do not have detailed information for the whole region about the degree of the indigenous population's cultural integration, there are data for some areas, such as the

<sup>48</sup> A general overview can be found in MAGALLÓN BOTAYA (2006) 311, 312, 319, in which the lack of detailed studies on Zaragoza's region stands out, as other authors have already highlighted (ARIÑO GIL [1990] 88-92), with the impression that the rural population became denser from the first century BCE and above all in the first to second centuries CE. This chronology is deduced from well-studied areas such as the region around *Turiaso* (Tarazona), on the bank of the river Queiles (GARCÍA SERRANO / PÉREZ PÉREZ [2010-2011] 94), where a dense network of small rural family settlements has been revealed which seems to have taken shape above all in the first century CE. In Caesar Augusta's territory, an increased rural population density dating from the first century CE is suggested by the centuriations associated with the foundation of the colony (studied by ARIÑO GIL ([990]), and the construction of the Muel and Almonacid de la Cuba dams in the Augustan (or Tiberian) period (which will be discussed later), as well as the state of peace characteristic of the Principate. Hydraulic infrastructures, however, such as that mentioned in the *Tabula Contrebiensis*, which is dated to 87, suggest the possibility that in certain areas rural development may have been earlier.

<sup>49</sup> ASENSIO ESTEBAN (1995) 143; FERRERUELA GONZALVO / MÍNGUEZ MORALES (2003); on La Cabañeta and its Italic findings, MÍNGUEZ MORALES / DÍAZ ARIÑO (2011).

<sup>50</sup> *CIL* I<sup>2</sup> 709.

<sup>51</sup> CAES. *BC* 1, 51; on the interpretation of the passage, F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2006c) 195-196.

far east. Here, the use of Latin from the first century BCE is attested, both among Italic population — such as the inscription on a mosaic pavement associated with a *collegium* in La Cabañeta,<sup>52</sup> — as well as for the indigenous population, such as bilingual stamps on mortar from a pottery workshop whose location is as yet unidentified, found, for example, in La Corona.<sup>53</sup> Even more significant, because they are official documents, are the bilingual inscriptions, the earliest in the region, from the local mints of *Kelse* and *Usekerte* struck around the 40s BCE.<sup>54</sup> We do not have accurate information for the situation further west; nevertheless, in cities such as *Salduie* and *Contrebia Belaisca*, the impact of the Roman ways of life were also noticeable, as can be seen, for example, in the domestic architecture of Italic style,<sup>55</sup> in the incorporation of monumental metal inscriptions that were typically Roman, such as the Contrebian inscriptions on bronze, or in the undertaking by the Salluienses of hydraulic infrastructures mentioned by the *Tabula Contrebiensis* from 87 BCE, fruit no doubt of the early incorporation of Roman engineering techniques.<sup>56</sup>

Accordingly, the result of the foundation of the colony was that, together with the veterans of legions IV Macedonica, VI Victrix and X Gemina settled by Augustus,<sup>57</sup> and perhaps

<sup>52</sup> *AE* 2001, 1237; FERRERUELA GONZALVO *et al.* (2003); F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2011a) 139-147 and (forthcoming a).

<sup>53</sup> On these inscriptions M. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2003) and ESTARÁN TOLOSA (2012).

<sup>54</sup> On the bilingual coins of Hispania Citerior, F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / ESTARÁN TOLOSA (2011) 17.

<sup>55</sup> ASENSIO ESTEBAN (1995) 168 ff. (Botorríta) and 318 ff. ; on the Iberian materials recovered in the centre of Zaragoza, principally between the Plaza de la Seo and Calle Universidad, see AGUILERA ARAGÓN (1991) 13-15, including the important section of a wall, 34 m long, located in Calle Sepulcro (1-15), which may correspond to the defences of the Iberian city; the best-known area corresponds to certain domestic structures of Italian style, whose level of abandonment (C2) dates them to the middle of the first century CE: GALVE IZQUIERDO (1996); FATÁS CABEZA / M. BELTRÁN LLORIS (1997) 117.

<sup>56</sup> On this inscription, F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2009b) 33-42; (2010) 27-31.

<sup>57</sup> According to the evidence of local coinage *RIC* 319, 325, 326, 346.

other Roman citizens who added to the initial number of colonists, the new community had to process a large number of previous inhabitants, among whom, as has been discussed, were groups of *peregrini* with different cultural roots — Iberians, Celtiberians, and Vascones — as well as probably small clusters of Roman citizens. The latter, in all likelihood, would have been included among the new colonists and received their respective plots. For the peregrine population, there were two possible options: expel them or let them continue living in the new community. Although we have no specific information on the subject, the latter case seems more likely since, given the significant extent of the colonial territory, it is unlikely that the contingent of veteran settlers — around three thousand, as we have seen — could have managed to farm such a large area; the need for a labour force to cultivate the land would therefore have made it expedient for the previous population — or at least, part of it — to remain. In the same way, the integration of the local population — irrespective of whether they had received compensation for their lands or whether they were expropriated — would create fewer political tensions than their forced expulsion. There were, moreover, no reasons, military or otherwise, to expel the population, since the areas had been peaceful for a long time and had to a significant extent assimilated Roman ways of life, as has been discussed. In fact, the integration of the peregrine population in the colonies, despite having been somewhat underestimated by research, seems to have been more common than previously believed.<sup>58</sup>

If they were not expelled, the local population could be treated in a variety of ways.<sup>59</sup> One possibility was that they retained their own political structures according to the so-called *Doppelgemeinden* system, or they became dependents of the colony as

<sup>58</sup> On this, see especially GAGLIARDI (2006), in which he emphasises the existence of two distinct groups of *incolae* in Roman communities, ‘indigeni’ and ‘trasferiti’, the former being especially common in Roman colonies.

<sup>59</sup> GAGLIARDI (2006) 508.

*adtributi*,<sup>60</sup> although there is no indication that this was the case in *Caesar Augusta*. Another, more likely scenario is that they were integrated as *incolae* and assigned plots of land within the *pertica*,<sup>61</sup> probably of lower quality as occurred, for example, with the *Tricastini* in the colony of *Arausio* (Orange), as its cadaster records: (*iugera*) *Tricastinis reddita*, (*agri*) *Tricastinis redditi*.<sup>62</sup> In this case, the previous inhabitants, transformed into *incolae* and probably resettled on new land, would have been subject to the exaction of tributes by the urban magistrates, as well as to the *munera possessionis* and *personalia*, in exchange for which they could have benefitted from the services offered by the colony, although obviously without full political rights<sup>63</sup> since in practice they were considered residents, not citizens, of the colony.<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, however, it cannot be ruled out that some of the indigenous inhabitants may have been included among the colonists, as could happen, for example, in *Carthago* and *Ara Agrippinensium*, if certain passages in Appian and Tacitus can be thus interpreted,<sup>65</sup> or in ‘honorary’ colonies, as were *Tarraco* and *Carthago Noua* in Hispania.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>60</sup> GAGLIARDI (2006) 174, 214.

<sup>61</sup> A situation repeatedly recorded by the *gromatici*: SIC. FLACC. *Cond. agr.* 155, 6 ff. (LACHMANN); HYG. *Cond. agr.* 116, 16 ff. (LACHMANN); GAGLIARDI (2006) 20 and esp. 191-208, which analyses various instances.

<sup>62</sup> *AE* 1962, 143, particularly the cadaster B; GAGLIARDI (2006) 191-195.

<sup>63</sup> As can be deduced from the *Lex Malacitana* § 53, only those *incolae, qui ciues R(omani) Latiniue ciues erunt* could vote to elect magistrates — and only as members of a single *curia*.

<sup>64</sup> On *incolae* and taxation, GAGLIARDI (2006) 224 ff.

<sup>65</sup> APP. *Pun.* 136 (οἰκήτοράς τε Ῥωμαίους μὲν αὐτὸν τρισχιλίους μάλιστα πυνθάνομαι, τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς ἐκ τῶν περιοίκων συναγαγεῖν); TAC. *Hist.* 4, 28 (*quod gens Germanicae originis eiurata patria [Romanorum nomen] Agrippinenses uocarentur*); GAGLIARDI (2006) 201-211, esp. 210 n. 184 and 211 n. 190; this process had ancient precedents, such as that of *Antium* (LIV. 8, 14).

<sup>66</sup> *Tarraco*’s status as a titular or honorific colony, that is, founded without a deduction of veterans in the strict sense, which has generally been accepted since studies such as that of VITTINGHOFF (1952) 27 = 1243 n. 4, has recently been questioned by RUIZ DE ARBULO (2002) 146; his suggestion has been received with caution by some, such as ARRAYÁS MORALES (2005) 177, but accepted, for example, by ALFÖLDY (2011) xcvi: “Colonia haud dubie deductione ueteranorum constituta est”.

The lack of urban structures dominant among the region's local communities at the end of the first century BCE should not be seen as a negative factor for the establishment of the colony. On the contrary, their integration into a Roman colony designed to play a central role in the region would for many be an incentive: for those who may enjoy Roman citizenship — or who could accede to it upon the colony's foundation — the incentive was obvious, since they would integrate among the colonists, while for the *peregrini* it implied incorporation into a well-organised community in which they would not enjoy full rights but would have access to better services and infrastructure. From the perspective of the colony's founder, Augustus, the lack of active urban communities in many areas of the region would facilitate the settlement of thousands of new military inhabitants, minimising tensions with the local population. Such tensions would obviously have been reduced further if some or all of the land that made up the territory of *Caesar Augusta* had not simply been confiscated, but had been purchased with some of the 260 million sesterces which, according to Augustus' own testimony, he invested in 30 and 14 BCE, the probable date of the foundation of *Caesar Augusta*, to buy provincial properties for his colonists.<sup>67</sup>

From this perspective, and despite the hypothetical nature of many of the previous observations, it seems clear that the establishment of the *colonia Caesar Augusta* in that part of the Middle Ebro Valley, far from being catastrophic for the local population, while it could have been detrimental for some, was for others clearly a positive event (Pl. 4.4).

## 6. Infrastructures and imperial investment: irrigation systems

It is difficult to see the foundation of *Caesar Augusta* by Augustus around 14 BCE<sup>68</sup> as an isolated event, as simply a means of

<sup>67</sup> *RGDA* 16.

<sup>68</sup> On the foundation date F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2007b) 5-6, and particularly F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2009a) 58-60.

settling discharged veterans. The new colony, unlike *Celsa*, seems to have been conceived to organise the large region of Hispania Citerior located between, on one side, the Iberian coastal lands, already pacified by the start of the second century BCE and equipped with a strong network of *municipia* and colonies, and, on the other, the westernmost Celtic regions of Meseta, in which there had been fighting well into the first century BCE and in which Roman presence, in the absence of privileged cities, was still secured by military camps. To evolve this function, it enjoyed a suitable position: situated next to the Ebro, the main natural communication route with the Mediterranean coast, it was also in the centre of that ellipse of privileged cities and at the meeting point of the three ethnic areas of the northeast peninsula — Vasconic, Celtic and Iberian.

The city's destiny to play a significant role is demonstrated in a way by the decision of its founder, (*Imperator*) *Caesar Augustus*, to bestow precisely his own name upon it, (*colonia*) *Caesar Augusta*, a privilege enjoyed by no other city in the empire.<sup>69</sup> To ensure that it could play this role adequately, the *princeps* spared no resources. Firstly, he designated it capital of a large *conuentus iuridicus* that covered over 400 km from north to south, from the Pyrenees to Alcalá de Henares, and more that 300 km from west to east, from Logroño to Lérida, and which encompassed over 50 communities, including one colony, five Roman *municipia* and five Latin ones, one federate city and more than 40 stipendiary cities.<sup>70</sup> *Caesar Augusta* thus became the urban reference centre for these communities. It transformed into a privileged space for the interactions between the regional

<sup>69</sup> On the exceptional nature of the colony's name, see F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (1992), linking the application of this name not only with the important role attributed to the colony in organising the territory, but also with the existence of a notorious concentration of cities in the region which were named after great men of the Republic: *Gracchurris*, *Pompelo* and *Lepida* / *Celsa*; G. Fatás proposes a different, but compatible, perspective, suggesting it was thus named because the colony was founded on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Augustus, in M. BELTRÁN LLORIS / FATÁS CABEZA (1998) 8. See now, F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2014) 129-139.

<sup>70</sup> PLIN. *NH* 3, 24.

communities and the provincial administration, led by the governor who would come to the colony at least once a year. It also became a centre for negotiation and dialogue between the urban elites of the cities assembled in the *conuentus*. In *Caesar Augusta* the annual assemblies would take place to discuss shared issues, but also to express loyalty to the *princeps* via the imperial cult led by the conventual *flamen* who was chosen by the representatives of the cities on such an occasion and acted as their spokesman in the annual provincial *concilia* in the capital, *Tarraco*.<sup>71</sup> In this way, *Caesar Augusta* became a means of bringing coherence and identity to an area that was culturally heterogeneous and composed of cities with different political status.

To consolidate this role Augustus restructured and redesigned the road network that ceased to be a vector of penetration from the Mediterranean coast through the corridor between the Pyrenees and the Ebro, to adopt a radial configuration with *Caesar Augusta* in the centre.<sup>72</sup> Milestones from the Augustan period show the *princeps*' interventions in at least five roads:<sup>73</sup> two Republican ones — the one that went from *Tarraco* to *Osca* via *Ilerda* and then descended to *Caesar Augusta*, and the branch that went from *Ilerda* to *Celsa*; the less well-defined route that crossed Bajo Aragón towards the Levante coast, one milestone of which exists in Jatiel;<sup>74</sup> the new road that followed the Ebro upstream from *Caesar Augusta* towards the northwest; and the newly-built route that also from *Caesar Augusta* crossed Cinco Villas towards *Pompelo*, which milestones record was laid by soldiers from the three founding legions of the city. Although there are no reliable sources for an Augustan intervention, it is highly probable that the road along the Jalón river, attested from the Flavian period, was already in use in this period. In this way, *Caesar Augusta* became the main hub of the road network

<sup>71</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / VELAZA FRÍAS (2013) 52-58.

<sup>72</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2006b); F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / MAGALLÓN BOTAYA (2007) 104 ff.; on the road network: MAGALLÓN BOTAYA (1997).

<sup>73</sup> LOSTAL (1992) 390 map.

<sup>74</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (1996).

in the north east, upon which converged at least six important roads that not only co-ordinated land traffic from the entire north-eastern Hispanian quadrant, but also organised the territory of the *conuentus* of *Caesar Augusta*, enabling the colony to function as the territorial capital. It benefitted, furthermore, from the option of using the Ebro to give its products access to the Mediterranean.

Building the road infrastructure was obviously funded with imperial finance, which also contributed by providing military labour, as can be deduced from the explicit references on various milestones along the *Caesar Augusta-Pompelo* road.<sup>75</sup> The *princeps*' contribution also included bestowing a monumental urban centre upon the colony, in keeping with its function,<sup>76</sup> including a large forum, situated to the west of the current Plaza del Pilar and for which we also have evidence of military labour.<sup>77</sup> With its ancillary buildings, the forum covered an area of more than 170 × 160 m around a square of 103 × 54 m, articulated around a temple that was probably dedicated to the imperial cult;<sup>78</sup> it was therefore well suited to satisfy the requirements not only of the colony but also of the *conuentus iuridicus*.

To all this should be added the important economic privilege of fiscal *immunitas* (Plin. *NH* 3, 24) with which Augustus honoured *Caesar Augusta* — as he did with some of his other colonies — and the possibility, already mentioned, that some of the land that was to form its very extensive territory could have been purchased by the *princeps* out of that 260 million sesterces

<sup>75</sup> On the milestones: LOSTAL (1992) no.s. 18-20; on the road: AGUAROD / LOSTAL (1982).

<sup>76</sup> On urban planning in the Augustan and Julio-Claudian periods, M. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2007) 30-36: in this period the wall was built — or at least, designed — and the road layout planned; the sanitation of the river bank was tackled, as was the first forum, a *macellum*, the sewage system (on which, see now ESCUDERO / GALVE IZQUIERDO [2013]), the big forum, the river port, the baths of San Juan y San Pedro, a new marketplace, the theatre...

<sup>77</sup> Thanks to stonemason marks preserved in several blocks: F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2008) 1069-1079.

<sup>78</sup> ESCUDERO / HERNÁNDEZ VERA / NÚÑEZ MARCÉN (2007) 54-56.

which, according to his own testimony, he invested in 30 and 14 BCE to buy provincial properties.<sup>79</sup>

The city's privileged relationship did not end with Augustus, as can be established from the fact that four members of the Julio-Claudian dynasty accepted local magistracies in the colony: Germanicus in Augustus' reign, as well as Drusus Caesar and Nero Julius Caesar, and Caligula in Tiberius' reign,<sup>80</sup> all of whom were honorary duumvirs, who could also have contributed to shaping and adorning the urban centre in its first decades of existence.

Alongside this collection of political decisions, fiscal privileges, road investments, port facilities, land acquisition, and financing of buildings, the funding of hydraulic infrastructures destined for irrigation deserves its own commentary.

The scale of imperial activity endowing various Italian cities with hydraulic infrastructures, especially in the Augustan period, has recently been revealed, highlighting the emperors' close interest in meeting the needs, firstly of port cities of particular strategic and economic importance, and secondly of veteran colonies.<sup>81</sup> Augustus' activities stand out among those of various emperors: up to 27 of the 94 Italian aqueducts that can be dated are ascribed to his era, many of which were built on Imperial initiative and situated in veteran colonies such as *Augusta Praetoria*, *Bononia*, *Brixia*, *Lucus Feroniae*, *Minturnae* and *Venafrum*. Many of these can be associated with the time of the colonies' foundation, and appear to follow initiatives planned by the *princeps*, rather than requests by the colonies.<sup>82</sup> A good example of this is the aqueduct of *Venafrum*, intended to provide a water supply to the colony but probably also used in a secondary capacity for irrigation, and which was built c. 17-11 BCE: the emperor's role was restricted to the construction of the infrastructure, and

<sup>79</sup> *RGDA* 16.

<sup>80</sup> *RPC* 325-329; 342-343; 362-364.

<sup>81</sup> DE ROSA (2009) 95.

<sup>82</sup> DE ROSA (2009) 92.

its administration, management and maintenance were then entrusted to the colonial authorities.<sup>83</sup> This was probably the model followed for the establishment of the irrigation systems fed by the dams in Muel and Almonacid de la Cuba, which will be discussed shortly.<sup>84</sup>

The geomorphological and climatic conditions of the region of the Middle Ebro Valley in which *Caesar Augusta* was situated significantly shaped agricultural development: firstly because of the relatively limited area of arable land, and secondly, because of the arid soil, which would require irrigation both for fruit and vegetable crops and, especially, to protect harvests in times of drought (Pl. 4.3). Clearly, the areas best suited to agricultural use are the floodplains of the main rivers: the Ebro, above all, obviously the river with the highest discharge, although for that very reason difficult to channel; then there are the tributaries on its left bank, starting in the Pyrenees, which bring a greater volume and quality of water — for our study this only includes the Gállego, which carries around 1000 hm<sup>3</sup> per annum; and finally, the tributaries flowing into the right bank, with lower and less regular flows of poorer quality: the Jalón (650 hm<sup>3</sup>), the Huerva (35 hm<sup>3</sup>) and the Aguasvivas (35 hm<sup>3</sup>).

Each of these rivers presents different technical challenges to using their resources. The Ebro, precisely because of its high discharge and gentle slopes, requires major works for the construction of diversion dams and long channels. The Gállego, and to a lesser extent the Jalón, with steeper slopes and an adequate discharge, allow simpler diversions. By contrast, the irregular and limited discharge of the Huerva and Aguasvivas make regulation dams indispensable.

The region of Zaragoza had irrigation channels from the first century BCE, according to the evidence in the *Tabula Contrebiensis*, dated to 87 BCE, which describes a public channel built

<sup>83</sup> *CIL* X 4842.

<sup>84</sup> On Roman irrigation in Hispania and the Zaragoza region, see F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / WILLI (2011).

by the Iberian city of *Salduie* that ran parallel to the Ebro along its right bank, carrying water from the lower stretch of the Jalón to Zaragoza.<sup>85</sup> This very area of the right bank of the Ebro shows an early centuriation of land, dated to the Augustan and Tiberian periods,<sup>86</sup> connected to irrigation systems that should be identified with the channel documented in the *Tabula Contrebiensis*, which may have continued down to the modern La Almozara canal.

By contrast, we do not have evidence for when the irrigation system started to function in the area of *pagus Gallorum* (Gallur), which is attested under Hadrian, although the signs of veteran settlement in the area could indicate that the channels date back to the foundation of the colony.<sup>87</sup>

The interventions that can with confidence be traced to the Augustan period are the two major dams constructed across the Huerva, in Muel, and the Aguasvivas, in Almonacid de la Cuba. The latter, which is 34 m high and 115 m long, is the highest preserved Roman dam and it is estimated that it could store around 6,000,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water, capable of irrigating around 7000 ha which today are used for cereal and olive crops. A significant population centre developed from the beginning of the Principate in El Pueyo that could be identified as the principal *uicus* of the area.<sup>88</sup> Near the dam across the Huerva, a settlement on the old site of *Contrebia Belaisca* (Botorrita) also regained its importance, and probably played a parallel role in this river valley.<sup>89</sup> Although it has not been possible to specify

<sup>85</sup> *CIL* I<sup>3</sup> 3951a: F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2009b) 40-41; (2010) 27-31.

<sup>86</sup> ARIÑO GIL (1990) 43-92.

<sup>87</sup> For instance, the name of the property of one centurion, *Rectus*, is attested, F. BELTRÁN LLORIS (2006a) 173; *LrH* I 24.

<sup>88</sup> After M. BELTRÁN LLORIS / VILADÉS CASTILLO (1994) 127-193, the dam was built in the time of Augustus.

<sup>89</sup> The dam has been dated to the Augustan period using C14; some marks that initially were thought to refer to the legions turned out to be stonemason marks: URIBE *et al.* (2010); URIBE *et al.* (2013); NAVARRO CABALLERO *et al.* (2014) 573-598.

the destination of the water stored at Muel, it is unlikely that it was intended only to serve the urban centre at *Caesar Augusta*, given the poor quality of the water; it is much more probable that it was used also for agriculture.

It is unlikely that the Caesaraugustan colonists themselves possessed the capital necessary to construct these two dams at the same time of the inception of the Caesaraugustan urban centre. It is therefore much more probable, in view of the emperor Augustus' overall intervention in the colony, that these two irrigation systems were partially or fully financed by the emperor, like the *Venafrum* aqueduct mentioned above.

In this way, the majority of the potential arable land available in the Caesaraugustan territory benefitted from irrigation systems, a fact which clearly entailed a substantial change in the region's economic development. That may have been through the creation of smaller ditches, such as those off the Jalón and Gállego, or through longer channels, such as the Republican one attested in the *Tabula Contrebiensis* and, perhaps, those that were provided in the area of *pagus Gallorum*, or through the construction of enormous dams which regulated the flow of the Huerva and Aguasvivas rivers.

We do not have enough information to determine which crops were grown in these irrigated areas.<sup>90</sup> Although the production of fruit and vegetables may be assumed in the areas nearest the colony and its principal *uici*, the majority of the irrigated areas must have been destined for cereal crops, well attested throughout the Middle Ebro Valley, as well as olives and vines, whose harvests would have been assured once it was possible to water them periodically. After the establishment of the colony, the production of wine and oil, staple foods in the Roman diet, must have increased significantly; this could explain the absence in the region, from the Flavian period, of foreign amphorae used to transport wine, and already from the Augustan period, of

<sup>90</sup> F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / WILLI (2011) 30.

amphorae used to transport oil, both of which would progressively have been substituted by local products.<sup>91</sup>

## 7. Concluding remarks

The conceptual and methodological regeneration that Romanisation studies have been undergoing in recent decades has offered new approaches to many aspects of that process. It has led to a more balanced understanding of the field, by counterbalancing the traditional, unilateral, Romano-centric perspective with more multilateral and dialectic approaches which also take account of the different provincial contexts. One of the most obvious consequences of this paradigm shift has been a reduction in interpretative homogeneity and the emergence of diversity, which reveals very clearly the need to counterbalance general depictions with case studies.

A good example of this issue is the study of Roman colonies, which can no longer be presented merely as benign instruments of the civilising power of Rome, as Salmon characterised them in 1969. In doing so, he disregarded not only the broad spectrum of regional and historical contexts in which the process of colonisation unfolded over the centuries, but also the highly negative effect that the creation of new colonies could have upon certain Italic and provincial communities. This, nevertheless, should not lead to generalisations from the opposite perspective, which see the establishment of a colony as an inevitable catastrophe for the provincial population, or which challenge the elevated opinion of colonies transmitted in the Roman sources — above all those from the Principate — in an attempt to blur the idiosyncrasies that distinguished them from the other categories of city, almost to the point of dissolving — or deconstructing — that category.

<sup>91</sup> M. BELTRÁN LLORIS / VILADÉS CASTILLO (1994).

The fact of being a colony was certainly no guarantee of success for the cities that enjoyed that status, nor did it necessarily confer better conditions than in other communities. However, it cannot be stated either that the colonies did not enjoy privileges over other cities, or that they did not receive favourable treatment from central administration, and in particular from the emperors who founded them. This built into the developing urban system inequalities, which not only affected their status as population centres and centres of administration, but also their regional economic status.

To that end, it is useful to examine the position of many of the colonies established by Caesar or Augustus, in the context of the Spanish provinces. *Corduba*, *Tarraco* and *Emerita Augusta* benefitted from being provincial capitals. Wherever possible, furthermore, it was also the colonies that were chosen to be the seats of *conuentus iuridici* such as in the cases of *Carthago Noua*, *Caesar Augusta*, *Astigi*, *Pax Iulia* and *Scallabis*: in only one instance was a *municipium* chosen, *Gades*, which was one of the wealthiest and most dynamic cities in the west. (In the north-western *conuentus* of *Tarraconensis*, there were no privileged cities in the Augustan period.) To this can be added the role of Spanish colonies like *Corduba*, *Hispalis*, *Vcubi*, *Tucci*, *Tarraco*, *Barcino*, *Ilici* and *Emerita*, among others, as cradles of senatorial families.<sup>92</sup>

The Middle Ebro Valley provides examples of two clearly divergent colonial trajectories. One was *Celsa*, a colony from the Caesarian period which was abandoned scarcely a century after its foundation, which demonstrates how, in effect, simply possessing the status of 'colony' did not assure the success of a settlement. The other was *Caesar Augusta*, the colony Augustus baptised with his own name, which, in contrast, not only took root thanks to the administrative functions assigned to it by the *princeps*, the provision of a vast territory, and the financing of

<sup>92</sup> DES BOSCS-PLATEAUX (2005) 41, 404-411.

road infrastructures and innovative hydraulic installations<sup>93</sup> in an urban centre that was important on a regional scale, but that it also regenerated and revitalised an extensive area and an urban fabric that had been profoundly damaged during the civil wars of the 70s and 40s BCE. This intervention was of course not necessarily beneficial for all affected, but cannot from any perspective be characterised as catastrophic.

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<sup>93</sup> Some interesting links can also be established between Augustan colonies and irrigations systems, see F. BELTRÁN LLORIS / WILLI (2011) 33, fig. 2 and 51.

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## DISCUSSION

*F. Hurllet:* J'aimerais souligner ici tout d'abord l'originalité de l'approche adoptée et poser ensuite deux questions. Concernant la première partie de la présentation, le mérite de F. Beltrán Lloris n'est pas tant de porter l'attention sur le monde provincial — après tout, il y a longtemps que les historiens cherchent à étudier le monde romain dans la perspective qui était celle des provinciaux — que de montrer dans quelle mesure le contexte proprement local pesait dans la mise en place de ce qui était un des plus forts marqueurs de la romanité. Cette perspective s'inscrit dans un courant historiographique qui montre à quel point la fondation de colonies romaines fut loin d'être un processus homogène et qui est aujourd'hui beaucoup plus sensible à la singularité des cas. On voit en effet à quel point le contexte et l'intervention de Rome changèrent si l'on compare la brutalité de l'intervention romaine dans le contexte de la création d'*Augusta Praetoria* (Aoste) au contexte de création de *Caesar Augusta* tel qu'il a été décrit avec précision par F. Beltrán Lloris. Il demeure que le nom même de la colonie, *Caesar Augusta*, ne fait référence à aucun substrat indigène et renvoie uniquement au fondateur de la colonie, ce qui est assez remarquable pour être souligné. Peut-on expliquer cette dénomination ? Je voudrais enfin revenir sur un autre élément notable, l'échec de la *Colonia Iulia Victrix Lepida Celsa*. C'est une situation exceptionnelle : connaît-on des situations parallèles dans le monde romain et quelles explications peut-on apporter ?

*F. Beltrán Lloris:* En efecto, el examen de la praxis colonial desarrollada por Roma a lo largo de los siglos, desde el comienzo de la República hasta el final del Principado, pone de manifiesto con claridad dos aspectos: por una parte, que ese particular

mecanismo de creación de nuevas ciudades emanadas de la comunidad cívica romana y ligadas estrechamente a ella fue un instrumento estratégico fundamental y recurrente a lo largo de los siglos; pero, a la vez y como no podía ser de otra manera, que según la época, los condicionantes sociales y políticos del momento o las necesidades del contexto local, las colonias adoptaron diferentes modalidades y desarrollaron funciones específicas que resulta imprescindible examinar de forma diferenciada: desde el control de territorio, pasando por la necesidad de asentar sectores de la población desfavorecidos o de responder a las aspiraciones de los soldados hasta la afirmación personal de sus promotores o el deseo de las ciudades de adquirir un título prestigioso.

Por ello, más allá de las grandes narrativas y de las interpretaciones generales, imprescindibles sin duda para escribir la historia, las aseveraciones poco matizadas que pretendan reducir la praxis colonial simplemente a un fenómeno meramente benéfico para Roma o catastrófico para las poblaciones en cuyo seno se asentaron están condenadas a ser desmentidas por el estudio de los casos concretos.

En cuanto a las dos preguntas específicas que formulaba Frédéric Hurlet, la primera subraya la excepcionalidad del nombre con el que *Caesar Augusta* fue denominada. A mi juicio, este hecho responde a diversos factores. Por un lado, el hecho de que su enorme *pertica* estuviera constituida por la acumulación de los territorios de varias ciudades precedentes y no de una sola (*Salduie, Alauo, Contrebia Belaisca,...*) contribuyó sin duda a que el nombre de la nueva colonia no reflejara el de ninguna de sus predecesoras; algo similar debió ocurrir con otras dos colonias augústeas dotadas de enormes territorios y carentes de un nombre que remitiera a su pasado precolonial: *Emerita Augusta* (Mérida) y *Pax Iulia* (Béja). Por otra parte, de este modo se enfatizaba la identidad de la denominación de la ciudad y la de su fundador, (*Imperator*) *Caesar Augustus*, que quizá pudo verse inducido a esta decisión por la acumulación en la región de ciudades que aludían a prohombres republicanos como Tiberio

Sempronio Graco (*Graccurris*, Alfaro), Pompeyo Magno (*Pompelo*, Pamplona) o Marco Emilio Lépido (*colonia Iulia Victrix Lepida Celsa*, Velilla de Ebro), que a partir de la creación del *conuentus iuridicus Caesaraugustanus* quedaban en cierto modo supeditadas a su ciudad, la ciudad de Augusto, de la que simbólicamente dependerían las de Graco, Pompeyo o Lépido (F. Beltrán Lloris [1992]). Finalmente, cabe suponer que si el príncipe aceptó darle su nombre a la nueva colonia era porque la consideraba destinada a desempeñar un papel relevante en la región, más allá de las posibilidades de que asistiera personalmente a su fundación o de que esta coincidiera con su aniversario, circunstancias posibles, sin duda, pero improbables por el momento (F. Beltrán Lloris [2014]).

En cuanto a la segunda pregunta, el igualmente excepcional abandono de *colonia Iulia Victrix Lepida Celsa* un siglo después de su fundación (c. 44 a. E. - c. 60 d. E.), es un hecho del que no conozco paralelos, al menos en lo que respecta a colonias romanas. Si es cierto que determinadas colonias latinas republicanas pasaron por dificultades como la propia *Aquileia* que, fundada en 181 a. E., requirió una segunda deducción de colonos en 169 a. E., al igual que ocurrió con las pequeñas *Buxentum* y *Sipontum*, casi abandonadas en 186, tras su establecimiento en 195, que debieron recibir nuevos contingentes de pobladores: pese a ello seguían habitadas a comienzos del Principado. En el caso de *Celsa*, sin duda, la fundación de *Caesar Augusta* a una cincuentena de kilómetros al oeste debió afectarle negativamente, habida cuenta del relevante rol que Augusto atribuyó a esa ciudad: de cualquier forma, esto ocurrió treinta años después de su establecimiento (14 a. E.) mientras que *Celsa* no parece mostrar síntomas de deterioro urbano hasta sesenta años más tarde y, por otra parte, se conocen en la propia Hispania casos similares de convivencia de colonias cesarianas y augústeas de muy distinta relevancia a corta distancia como *Metellinum* y *Emerita Augusta*. Sin duda el hecho de que el fundador de la colonia, Lépido, cayera en desgracia ya en 36 a. E. privó a la ciudad de un protector, pero ni este factor ni los antes señalados

permiten explicar el fracaso de esta ciudad, de la que sus elites, no obstante, parecen emigrar desde las primeras décadas del Principado como queda bien ilustrado por la marcha de los ancestros del senador Licinio Sura, oriundos con toda probabilidad de *Celsa*, desde esta ciudad a *Tarraco* (F. Beltrán Lloris [2016] con bibliografía). Tal vez la excavación en el futuro de las áreas públicas de la ciudad suministren nuevos elementos de juicio para explicar la anomalía que supone el abandono de una colonia romana cien años después de su fundación.

*P. Eich:* Some scholars now claim that colonies in Greece and Asia Minor were characterized more by differences than by similarities, the single most important difference being how the local population was treated.

Given this assessment: What do you think are the most important differences between Spanish colonies and the settlements in, say, Greece or Asia Minor? Do you believe in the so-called ‘honorary colonies’?

*F. Beltrán Lloris:* Obviamente la categoría de ‘colonia honoraria’ es un constructo moderno para designar a aquellas ciudades que disfrutaron de la condición de colonia sin que conste que existiera en ellas una instalación específica de nuevos pobladores. Este fue seguramente el caso, por ejemplo, de *Italica* (Santiponce, Sevilla), la patria chica de Adriano que nos consta explícitamente, entre otros testimonios gracias al conocido pasaje de Aulo Gelio (*Noct. Att.* 16, 13, 4), que requirió del príncipe la obtención de esta condición y que no solo la consiguió a título honorífico sino acompañada de una notable inversión imperial para el desarrollo de un nuevo barrio de la ciudad (Caballos Rufino [2010]). Se ha especulado también con la posibilidad de que otras ciudades hispanas con antigua presencia romana como *Tarraco* (Tarragona) o *Carthago Noua* (Cartagena) adquirieran la condición de colonias romanas en época de César sin recibir tampoco contingentes de colonos: aunque

esta posibilidad en el caso de *Tarraco* se ha cuestionado recientemente (Ruiz de Arbulo [2002]; Alföldy [2011] xcvi), parece, sin embargo, improbable que la ciudad hubiera recibido una aportación de colonos veteranos substancial, por lo que debe aceptarse en principio que la condición colonial se otorgó a la población previamente instalada en ella. Por lo tanto, en este sentido, no parece que exista una diferencia substancial con el trato que teóricamente se daría a colonias orientales como *Caesarea Maritima* o Antioquía.

*N. Purcell*: I am fascinated by what this paper has shown of the way scholarly orthodoxy has shifted from a belief (deriving ultimately from Mommsenian authority) in equipollence, homogeneity, uniformitarianism (“Normalisierung”, as Peter Eich called it). Our discussion has by contrast, repeatedly returned to the ways in which the Roman Empire was ‘an extraordinarily hierarchical space’: an inequality which was deliberately cultivated by the Romans. In this context, and given the themes of my own paper, I was struck by the possibility that decisions concerning the *territoria* of chartered towns reflect some kind of administrative characterization of landscape and spatiality, a ‘zonal thinking’, on the part of the Romans. Do you yourself see this in the case of the Ebro valley? I also wonder whether you accept the implication which seems hard to avoid from your paper, that the delineation of the *territorium* of *Caesar Augusta* must already have ‘entailed’ accepting the crippling of *Celsa*, so that it is also odd that the latter struggled on to the Neronian period.

*F. Beltrán Lloris*: La desigualdad es una noción central en la ideología social romana; o, dicho de otra forma, la igualdad social no parece haber formado parte nunca del ideario de las sociedades clásicas. Por ello y aunque nos sorprenda, en las *largitiones* los *decuriones* recibían aportaciones mayores que las destinadas a los meros ciudadanos, y en los *alimenta* trajáneos se destinaba una contribución mayor para la manutención de los

muchachos que la que debían de recibir las muchachas. Esa es la razón que explica también por qué Plinio el Viejo al describir el Imperio Romano en los libros geográficos de su *Naturalis Historia* menciona de manera exhaustiva las colonias romanas, siguiendo el proceder del mismo Augusto, mientras que solo suministra una selección, a veces muy abrupta, de las otras categorías de ciudades, incluidos los municipios romanos y latinos.

Resulta evidente en el terreno político y administrativo esta primacía de las colonias, por ejemplo en la selección de la capitalidad provincial que muy frecuentemente recayó en colonias y no solo en Hispania (*Tarraco, Corduba, Emerita*), sino en otras muchas provincias: *Narbo, Lugdunum, Tingi, Caesarea, Carthago, Salona, Syracusae, Corinthus, ...*

Por todo ello la fundación de *Caesar Augusta* en relación con el previo establecimiento de *Celsa* y la promoción de los diferentes municipios romanos y latinos del valle medio del Ebro, tal y como la he presentado más arriba, obligan a considerar que las intervenciones de Augusto en la región respondieron a una cierta planificación territorial (o, si se prefiere, ‘zonal thinking’), en la que la relevancia de las comunidades según su categoría política resulta evidente y refleja la desigualdad existente entre ellas (lo que podría en efecto denominarse ‘deliberately cultivated inequality’), bien plasmada en la relación de comunidades reflejada por Plinio el Viejo, entre las que distingue colonias romanas, municipios romanos, municipios latinos, ciudades federadas y ciudades estipendiarias (Plin. *NH* 3, 24). Obviamente en el caso de Augusto confluyen varios factores que propiciaron esta aparente planificación: un largo reinado, la disposición de medios económicos inmensos, un conocimiento directo de la región,...

Se desconoce cuál era la extensión del territorio de *Celsa* hacia el oeste antes de la fundación de *Caesar Augusta* y, en consecuencia, resulta imposible determinar si la fundación de la colonia augústea supuso una reducción de la *pértica celsense*. Los estudios arqueológicos realizados en *Celsa* — limitados por el momento a la arquitectura doméstica — no muestran síntomas

de deterioro urbano a lo largo de los reinados de Augusto y Tiberio, más allá de la 'fuga' de algunas familias dirigentes como la de los Licinios Suras a la que ya se ha hecho referencia. En consecuencia no parece que la fundación de *Caesar Augusta* redundara en una afección negativa inmediata para *Celsa*.

*F. Hurllet*: I would like to come back to Nicholas Purcell's important intervention and make a very small step backward. We all agree that the whole Roman Empire is an extraordinary hierarchical space, a regime of *imperium* and *auctoritas*. However, it is a fact that the presence of the previous indigenous inhabitants of the territory of a Roman colony was taken more into account during and from the cesarian-augustan period. You made a good and important point when you suggest that these people were integrated in the colony in a way or another. The parallel with Carthago is striking. How do you understand from this point of view the text of Appian (*Pun.* 136) which you quoted? Did some of the indigenous inhabitants become Roman citizens or *incolae*? I am inclined to favour the latter solution given the use of the verb (*sunagagein*).

*F. Beltrán Lloris*: Concuero por completo en la apreciación de que el tratamiento de las poblaciones provinciales se transformó durante los gobiernos de César y Augusto, de forma que dejaron de ser meros *praeda populi Romani*, por decirlo en palabras de Cicerón (*Verr.* 2, 2, 7), para recibir una consideración más positiva como sede, además, de comunidades romanas de rango colonial y municipal.

En el caso del pasaje de Apiano relativo a *Carthago*, una colonia dotada de un territorio inmenso, parece difícil entender el texto griego de otra manera que no sea que Augusto completó el número de 3.000 colonos romanos con población de la región. Más difícil resulta precisar cuál fuera la condición política de esa población: ¿ciudadanos romanos o peregrinos? Sin duda los primeros debieron ser sumados al número de colonos, pero resulta igualmente verosímil la posibilidad de que se incorporara a ellos

a las elites locales, por ejemplo. En consecuencia me inclino por considerar que la fundación de una colonia romana comportaba no solo la instalación de colonos (veteranos o no) venidos de lejos, sino también la incorporación de otros ciudadanos romanos asentados en la región y de población peregrina local, incorporada tanto entre el número de los colonos propiamente dichos como en condición de *incolae*.

*S. von Reden*: Related to Nicholas' question of Roman urban development as an instrument of creating (or demonstrating) inequality among the Romans in the Tarraconensis: can this assumption be related only to the foundation of *coloniae*, or also to the effects of Roman urban policy? In other words: do we see economic competition in these towns, and uneven economic development? Is there any way of showing that these towns were capable of significant amounts of surplus production, or were they just sustained by the water supply and irrigation systems developed for these towns?

*F. Beltrán Lloris*: La estricta gradación de ciudades que Plinio el Viejo refleja en su descripción de Hispania (colonias romanas, municipios romanos, municipios latinos etc.) es un indicador más de la desigualdad existente entre las ciudades provinciales. Una desigualdad que se plasma en todas las vertientes desde la posibilidad de acuñar moneda propia — reservada para colonias y municipios — hasta el desarrollo monumental de las ciudades o la promoción política de sus elites.

En lo que respecta al efecto de las inversiones en infraestructuras hidráulicas destinadas a la irrigación no disponemos de datos precisos para valorar su impacto sobre la producción agrícola. La posibilidad de regar en tierras de secano puede redundar en la obtención de más de una cosecha anual, pero ante todo lo que permite es asegurar su recolección en años de sequía. Sin embargo es más que probable que la irrigación permitiera además diversificar la producción, destinar una parte de ella a la comercialización exterior y obtener rendimientos más

elevados. Plinio el Viejo, por ejemplo, hace referencia al extraordinario rendimiento económico de las alcachofas cultivadas en *Corduba* (NH 19, 152), un cultivo que requiere irrigación y que se ubica en una ciudad en torno a la cual se ha comprobado la existencia de numerosas infraestructuras de riego, en este caso cisternas sobre todo.

