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LAND-HOLDING PATTERNS IN ITALY DURING THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE

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LAND-HOLDING PATTERNS IN ITALY DURING THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE

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ABSTRACT

LAND-HOLDING PATTERNS IN ITALY DURING
THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE

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Underlying the general theme of this study is the belief that although 27 B.C. was the acknowledged beginning of the Roman Empire, the economic, political, and social shifts from the Republican patterns to the Imperial were continuing during the early Roman Empire. Land-holding systems, especially the Italian land-holding system, played a crucial role during such shifts, and directly or indirectly influenced the early Roman imperial policies.

This thesis is focused on Italian land-holding patterns during the early Roman Empire. It studies the origins and nature of such land-holding patterns in terms of who held the lands, who tilled them, and who managed them, in order to understand how the Italian land-holding system influenced or was influenced by the political stability, economic growth, and social mobility of the early Empire.

TO MY PARENTS

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CHAPTER I

A REVIEW OF ITALIAN LAND HOLDING DURING THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD

In ancient Roman history, agriculture always was the main element of the economy, and land-holding systems always played a very important role in the ancient Roman economy, as well as in Roman politics and society.

The Romans appear to have been innately good farmers. From the very beginning, when the Roman Republic was first established, the Roman institutions determined that a Roman's life was very closely linked with land. During the early period of the Roman Republic, Roman citizenship meant the combination of the right of land holding in Italy, the political right of the vote, and the social right of serving in the militia. During the early period, most of the conquered land became public land, and was distributed only among Roman citizens. Although some Roman nobles had the tendency to hold or try to hold more land than others, every Roman citizen had the right to participate in the distribution of public land. This right to receive public land gave Roman citizens a great leverage to maintain their superior position in comparison with other non-Romans in

Italy. During the early Roman Republican period, almost every Roman was an owner of a plot of land which could provide him and his family a simple, but not poor, life, and enable him to secure the equipment of a soldier.

The overwhelming importance of agriculture in the Roman economy determined that most of the wealth in Roman society came from this source.[1] Landed property was the symbol of a Roman's wealth, and it also was the security for loans. Wealthy Romans tended to invest their surplus wealth in land, especially arable land, which was the safest form of investment. They hoped for a regular return from their land, which was probably around 5 to 6 percent of their investment yearly.[2] For the poor Romans, protecting the ownership of their lands meant not only protecting what they lived on, but also protecting themselves from slavery, and protecting their legal rights to participate in political and social activities.

Moreover, since from the very beginning Roman society was an aristocratic and highly stratified society, people's ideology strongly favored land owners. A standard Roman gentleman must be a land owner and make his livelihood on land not in crafts, or business. Cato's famous statement in his <u>On Agriculture</u> is a good example of the Roman aristocratic ideology.

> It is true that to obtain money by trade is sometimes more profitable, were it not so hazardous; and likewise money-lending, if it were as honourable.

> Our ancestors held this view and embodied it in their laws, which required that the thief be mulcted double and the usurer fourfold; how much less desirable a citizen they considered the usurer than the thief, one may judge from this. And when they would praise a worthy man their praise took this form: "good husbandman," "good farmer;" one so praised was thought to have received the greatest commendation. The trader I consider to be an energetic man, and one bent on making money; but, as I said above, it is a dangerous career and one subject to disaster. On the other hand, it is from the farming class that the bravest men and the sturdiest soldiers come, their calling is most highly respected, their livelihood is most assured and is looked on with the least hostility and those who are engaged in that pursuit are least inclined to be disaffected.[3]

According to the law which was passed during the second Punic war, and according to the tradition, the upper class, senators and their family members were forbidden to engage in commerce or to take part in the purchase of public contracts, even though the contracts were profitable. In most cases, distinguished Senators were more than happy to reside on their estates and supervise the farm work personally,[4] or even to work in the fields with their own hands. Cato, himself, was a good example. Therefore, those Romans who got rich through their involvement in business, even if they invested their money in land and even if their land-holding background was unquestioned, still were regarded as unsuitable for political office. "Merchants might retire from their trade and invest their money in respectable Italian land, and be acceptable socially; yet, they would still be regarded as not quite fit to be senators, certainly

not to be consuls."[5] Probably not even their sons could easily achieve senatorial rank.

The Roman's love for land and economic dependence on the soil can be seen in many ways. Unlike the Greeks who fought primarily for their internal or overseas commercial interests, the Romans won their conquests--first in Italy, then over the Mediterranean world mainly to satisfy their greed for land and their interests in agriculture. For example, the lack of Roman interest in foreign trade was plainly shown by the terms of the 4th century B.C. treaties with Carthage: The Romans tried mainly to protect the Latin coast militarily, and allowed the Carthaginians to monopolize the trade in the western Mediterranean.[6] Furthermore, the seaboard cities, such as Antium, during the early Roman Republic were intended to protect the coast land against military attack, rather than to open up overseas trade.[7]

Thus the Romans, at least during the early Republican period, seem to have had little commercial or overseas trade sense,[8] at least we cannot see any from the leading class's internal or international policies. This can also be ascertained from the history of Roman coinage. The Roman's first minting of bronze was probably not issued until about 300 B.C., and the earliest silver coins appeared not long before the first Punic war.[9]

Along with the Roman expansion, some Romans and Italians began to engage in various businesses, such as

the supplying of the troops, or the contracting for the public constructions, or the collecting of taxes from the provinces. After the Romans' conquest of the Mediterranean world, Italian traders and capitalists gained a stronger position in Aegean economic life and were active on the trade routes around the Mediterranean world. Nevertheless, the Romans' major interest still essentially focused on land and on agriculture.

Their conquests over the whole Mediterranean world certainly brought huge territories to the Romans. By the second century B.C., Italy had become the most important political and economic center of the Mediterranean world. Moreover, along with their expansion, the Romans widely assimilated aspects of Hellenistic cultures, and the assimilations effectively benefited the Romans. Scientific agriculture on Hellenistic models had begun to appear before the second Punic war and expanded markedly in the second century.[10] These Hellenistic models included at least two major aspects: more developed techniques of agriculture, such as cattle breeding, and new methods of agricultural management, whereby slaves worked as laborers, and a slave manager or freedman manager replaced the land owner's own supervision in the fields. From the economic viewpoint, those changes in Italian agriculture encouraged great progress for the Romans, for Italy had never produced food in greater quantity or in better quality before.

But the shifting social pattern caused by the Romans' world empire also brought many problems to the Romans. One of the most serious problems was the change of the Italian land-holding system, which in so many aspects was linked with every Italian's fortune. Along with Roman expansion, the public land increased rapidly, resulting from the confiscations in areas which had defected to Rome's enemies, or the confiscations during the internal political struggles. These public lands, in order to be utilized, were rented out for an annual fee. But because of the cost, they were leased from the State almost wholly by senatorial aristocrats or wealthy leaders of the Italian cities. In addition, the size of the private land of a few leading aristocrats increased at the expense of many poorer Roman citizens. Those small land holders lost their lands by taking out usurious loans, often from rich large land holders. The small farmers fell into debt because of competition with the big business of large estates, and these problems were often aggravated by the long-term absence from their lands during the wars.

The fact that many Roman citizens lost their lands had terribly harmed the strength of the Roman army which was the base of the Roman expansion. During the early Republican period, the Roman soldiers had to supply themselves with necessary equipment. If a Roman lost his land, it meant that he lost his ability to be a fighter in the

heavy armed legions. Since the small farmers constituted the backbone of the Roman legions, the decrease in the number of citizen farmers meant the decrease in the strength of the Roman army. In the second century B.C., Rome had to eat its own bitter fruit--to face the problem of the shortage of manpower for the army. For instance, from the new outburst of Spanish revolts in 154 B.C. onward, the Romans frequently had problems filling the ranks of their armies in Spain, Africa, and the East. According to Livy, in 151 B.C.,

> when the consuls Lucius Licinius Lucullus and Aulus Postumius Albinus were conducting the levy strictly and exempting no one as a favor, they were thrown into prison by tribunes of the people, who were unable to obtain exemption for their friends. When numerous failures in the war in Spain had caused such confusion in the Roman State that no one could be found even to undertake service as military tribune, or to accept a post as staff office. . . .[11]

The same thing happened also to the consuls of 138 B.C. Moreover, land problems not only endangered the Roman military force; they also brought many social problems to Rome. A few ambitious people, to gain support for their own advancement, could exploit the dissatisfaction of the displaced farmers.

On the whole, during the last century of the Roman Republic, its social, economic, and military crises which threatened the existence of the Republican regime were directly or indirectly, related to the land-question.

Therefore, some intelligent Roman nobles realized the terrible situation and tried to save the Roman Republic from collapse. The Gracchi brothers represented the reforming ideas of those nobles. The Gracchi, especially Tiberius Gracchus who could base his beliefs on his own experience in Spain and in other places, rightly realized that the fundamental cause for the decline of the free peasantry which furnished the Roman armies was the land question. Accordingly, they tried to carry out a new land law in order to limit the size of individual land holding, and thus, in some degree, to satisfy the poor's land hunger.

But, by the end of the second century B.C., the Roman Republic was quite different from its early period. It had been changed from a small city state to a world empire, its old simple pattern was gone. What Rome had to face at this time was not only the poor's land hunger, the rich men's greed, the Italians' demand for the same civil rights as those of the Romans, or even those new rising military generals' ambitions; more importantly, it had to face the redistribution of power and property,[12] which was demanded by the whole society. The Gracchi brothers' reform prescription certainly could not and did not meet the requirements of the redistribution. The Romans stumbled into the "solution" of a civil war. For

the poor Romans, civil war brought dreams of land redistribution which meant the hope of regaining a plot of land and regaining their active participation in the army and political activities; for the Italians, civil war meant the extension of Roman citizenship; for rich men and ambitious generals, it meant more property and power. The eighty years of civil wars offered, indeed, opportunities to every Roman and Italian to reach his hoped-for goal.

However, in the struggles over the power and property redistributions, the land question played a very important role, and, sometimes, it even played a dominating role. By the time of the civil wars, it was commonly recognized that the general who had a dependable, faithful army had the power. Although the political attitudes of the legionaries in the later Republic were varied and complex, everyone realized that the army was the most important instrument in the struggle for the redistribution of power and property. Every ambitious man tried to build or control a force, and many Romans and Italians were attracted by the inducements offered to join one of the personally recruited armies.

During the early Republican period, Roman military service was the duty of the able-bodied citizen, whenever the state was threatened. The campaigning season normally began in the spring and ended before the harvest. This Roman citizen militia was stricly an amateur body and the

soldiers did not receive pay,[13] unless there was booty to be shared. According to Diodorus Siculus and Livy, in the campaign of Veii in 403 B.C., "The Romans voted for the first time to give annual pay to the soldiers for their service."[14] Thus the citizen militia began to receive compensation for long-term campaigns. Polybius, however, was the first writer to give details of the Roman soldier's pay:

> As pay the foot-soldier receives two obols a day, a centurion twice as much, and a cavalry-soldier a drachma. The allowance of corn to a foot soldier is about two-thirds of an Attic medimnus a month, a cavalry-soldier receives seven medimni of barley and two of wheat. Of the allies the infantry receive the same, the cavalry one and one-third medimnus of wheat and five of barley, these rations being a free gift to the allies; but in the case of the Romans,the quastor deducts from their pay the price fixed for their corn and clothes and additional arms they require.[15]

Certainly during the last century of the Roman Republic, during those countless political and military conflicts between Marius and Sulla, or among the first triumvirs, the Roman Soldiers' payment was different under different generals and in different circumstances. It is certain that Caesar as a general doubled the pay of his soldiers from the annual rate of 112½ denarii to 225 denarii.[16] But when wars of conquest were long, especially after the outbreak of the civil wars, the monetary demands of the soldiers increased steadily until money could not buy their loyalty anymore. They wanted something more reliable than money--it was land.

Most of the Roman or Italian soldiers were the men who had lost their property or, as free tenants and day laborers, had never possessed any property. The soldiers had very little opportunity to be employed in civilian life after discharge because the majority of the Italian population was familiar only with agricultural works. Trade and crafts were mainly in the hands of slaves and freedmen. In addition, it was not easy for those veterans to buy land in Italy if they were not under some special leader's patronage. Because there were so many soldiers discharged from the legions yearly, rarely was private land available even to wealthy veterans willing to pay for land holdings. The veterans could gain a plot of land only from the public sources or from the confiscated lands, and this was possible only with the help of the powerful generals. This simple fact was why, during the civil wars, so many Romans and Italians gambled their fortunes on the army.

In turn, generals certainly needed soldiers and needed their loyalty; and land became the generals' bait to attract soldiers. Even Appian noted that during the last century of the Republic,

> the generals, for the most part, as is usually the case in civil wars, were not regularly chosen; that their armies were not drawn from the enrolment according to the custom of the fathers, nor for the benefit of their country; that they did not serve the public so much as they did the individuals who brought them together; and that they served these not by the force of law, but by reason of private

> promises, not against the common enemy, but against private foes; not against foreigners, but against fellow-citizens, their equals in rank. All these things impaired military discipline, and the soldiers thought that they were not so much serving in the army as lending assistance by their own favour and judgement, to leaders who needed them for their own personal ends.[17]

Actually after the time of the Gracchi brothers' reforms, almost every ambitious Roman general or politician realized the importance of the land question and tried to make use of it. Sulla was the first Roman who depended on his military force to try to establish his personal dictatorship. He attracted his soldiers and his enemies' troops by promising them greater and more definite advantages than did his foes. For example, according to Plutarch, when Sulla was surrounded by the troops of his enemy Scipio, he tried to debauch Scipio's men by means of his own

> . . . entering into the enemy's quarters and joining in conversation, they [Sulla's soldiers] gained some by present money, some by promises, others by fair words and persuasions; so that in the end, when Sulla with twenty cohorts drew near, on his men saluting Scipio's soldiers, they returned the greeting and came over, leaving Scipio behind them in his tent, where he was found all alone and dismissed.[18]

Plutarch also records that as soon as Sulla returned to Rome and declared himself dictator, he immediately had an act passed: "granting indemnity for what was passed, and for the future intrusting him with the power of life and death, confiscation, division of land. . . ."[19] When Marius

was elected consul for the sixth time, in 100 B.C., a major land law was issued which, in turn, favored his veterans.

After Marius' military reforms, the Roman civil militia was replaced by regularly paid troops. Soldiers were ever greedier, and land openly became the major motive which attracted many soldiers into the army. Caesar probably was the first Roman general who bought lands for his soldiers. Meanwhile, he also was very good at playing the land-question as an instrument for his political gains. From 60 B.C. onwards, Caesar proposed a number of land laws in order to please the Romans. Dio Cassius tells us that in 59 B.C.:

> Caesar wished to gain the favor of the whole multitude, that he might make them his own to an even greater degree. But since he was anxious to seem to be advancing the interests also of the optimates, in order to avoid incurring their enmity, he often told them that he would propose no measure which should not also be to their advantage. And, indeed, he so framed a certain measure concerning the land, which he wished to assign to the whole populace, as not to incur the least censure for it; yet he pretended he would not introduce even this measure, unless it should be according to their wishes.[20]

Here Caesar's land bill certainly was an obvious decoy to win political support from the lower classes, while placating the wealthy. In the same year, Caesar also proposed that the new revenues from Pompey's conquests should be used to purchase lands for veterans.[21] Even Catiline in 63 B.C. tried to use a program of cancellation of debts and redistribution of land to obtain the Romans' support.

In 44 B.C. after Caesar's assassination, his veterans deeply feared, not Caesar's enemies, but that they might lose the allotments Caesar had assigned to them. According to Appian, at one moment in 44 B.C., when Octavian declared himself to be an obedient servant of the Republic, and was ready to oppose Antony, he immediately lost the favor of Caesar's veterans who cared only for vengeance on Caesar's assassination and the realization of their land allotments.[22] This was why, at least in 43 B.C., even the Senate saw the necessity of satisfying the land desire of those soldiers on whom the nobles depended to fight with Antony. According to Cicero, on January 1, 43 B.C., the Senate passed a decree in this form.

> The Senate decrees the veteran soldiers who have defended and are defending Caesar, pontiff and the authority of this order, should, and their children after them, have an exemption from military service. And that Caius Pansa and Aulus Hirtius, the consuls, one or both of them, as they think fit, shall inquire what land there is in those colonies in which the veteran soldiers have been settled, which is occupied in defiance of the provisions of the Julian law, in order that they may be divided among these veterans. That they shall institute a separate inquiry about the Campanian district, and devise a plan for increasing the advantages enjoyed by these veteran soldiers; and with respect to the Martian legion,and to the fourth legion, and to those soldiers of the second and thirty-fifth legions who have come over to Caius Pansa, . . . the Senate decrees that they and their children shall have exemption from military service, except in the case of any Gallic and Italian sedition; and decrees further, that those legions shall have their discharge when this war is terminated, and that whatever sum of money Caius Caesar, pontiff and propraetor, has promised to the soldiers of those legions individually, shall be paid to them. And

> that Caius Pansa and Aulus Hirtius the consuls, one or both of them, as it seems good to them, shall make an estimate of the land which can be distributed without injury to private individuals; and that land shall be given and assigned to the soldiers of the Martian legion and of the fourth legion, in the largest shares in which land has ever been given and assigned to soldiers.[23]

On the whole, Octavian obtained the favor of the Caesarian troops by the adoption of Caesar's method of keeping soldiers's loyalties by the promise of land. Through those bought loyalties, he eventually won the victory. Octavian's triumph in 30 B.C. declared the final victory of a new pattern of government--the Roman Empire.

Almost everything was now changed in Rome, except the Roman's love of his land. Agriculture still was the most important basis of the Italian economy, and land was still the most desirable property for most Italians, in spite of the fact that in the early Roman Empire, trade and industry had a significant development.

However, the Italian land-holding system did change in certain aspects as Roman history went on. This change not only affected Roman politics, economy, and society, but also presented an unique pattern. The discussion below will describe the land-holding system of the early Roman empire, and how this system related to other aspects of the Empire in terms of political stability, economic growth, and social mobility.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER I

[1]R. Duncan-Jones, The Economy of the Roman Empire (Cambridge: University Press, 1974), p. 33.

[2]Ibid., p. 99.

[3]Marcus Cato, On Agriculture, Trans. by William Davis Hooper, Revised by Harrison Boyd Ash (Cambridge, Mass.: Leob Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1934), p. 3.

[4]Ibid., III.3.

[5]E. Badian, Publicans and Sinners (New York: Cornell Press, 1976), p. 50.

[6]Polybius, The History of Polybius, Trans. by W. R. Paton (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1960), 3.22-24.

[7]Ibid., 3.22-24.

[8]Eleanor G. Huzar, "Egyptian Influences on Roman Coinage," Classical Journal 60-61, p. 338.

[9]Ibid., p. 339.

[10]Chester G. Starr, A History of Ancient World, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 505.

[11]Titus Livius, Livy, Trans. by B. O. Foster. (Cambridge, Mass: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, Vol. 14), Summaries, XLVIII.

[12]M. Rostovtzeff, Social and Economical History of the Roman Empire, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 2.

[13]G. R. Watson, The Roman Soldier (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), p. 89.

[14]Diodorus Siculus, Diodorus of Sicily, Trans. by C. Bradford Welles (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1933), XIV.16; Livy, IV. 59, gives the same report.

[15]Polybius, The Histories, VI,39.

[16]Suetonius, "Caesar," The Twelve Caesars, Trans. by Robert Graves, Revised by Michael Grant (New York: Penguin Classics, Penguin Book Ltd., 1979), 26.

[17]Appian, Appian's Roman History, Trans. by Horace White, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1964), V. 17.

[18]Plutarch, The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), "Sulla,"

[19]Ibid., p. 570.

[20]Cassius Dio, Dio's Roman History, Trans. by Earnest Cary, Revised by Herbert Baldwin Foster, 9 Vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1970), XXXVIII.1.

[21]Cicero, Cicero's Letters to Atticus, Trans. by D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge: Penguin Classics, Cambridge University Press, 1965-1968), 19.(1.19).

[22]Appian, III, 41-42.

[23]Cicero, "The Fifth Philippic," The Orations of Cicero, Trans. by C. D. Yonge, Vol. IV (London: George Bell and Sons, York Street, Covert Garden, 1885), XIX.

CHAPTER II

PUBLIC LANDS

Public lands belonged to the populus Romanus, the Roman State. Such land usually was cultivated by private tenants of the State.[1] During the early Republican period, Rome had always converted some land conquered in the wars of conquest into public land. Such land, if distributed, was distributed only among the Roman citizens. During the Roman wars of conquest of Italy, the extent of the public land became tremendous, but by the time of Augustus, the amount of the public land in Italy was reduced, since the public land had been gradually transferred into private hands. Actually, this transfer of the public land into private hands started a long time before the Augustan Age, from the fourth century B.C. on. Many agrarian laws had been passed in Rome from time to time, and many of those laws dealt with the ager publicus, the land which belonged to the state.[2]

The State dealt with the public land in different ways. As Appian said, ". . . but of the land acquired by war they assigned the cultivated part forthwith to the colonists, or sold or leased it. . . . those who were

willing to work it might do so for a toll of the yearly crops, a tenth of the grain and a fifth of the fruit."[3] But, as Appian pointed out:

> the very opposite thing happened; for the rich, getting possession of the greater part of the undistributed lands and being emboldened by the lapse of time to believe that they would never be dispossessed, absorbing any adjacent strips and their poor neighbours' allotments, partly by purchase under persuasion and partly by force, come to cultivate vast tracts instead of single estates, using slaves as labourers and herdsmen, lest free labourers should be drawn from agriculture into the army.[4]

Thus those public lands eventually fell into the rich people's hands. Although initially those who rented the public lands did not have ownership rights, as time went on, those lands gradually seemed to be the renter's property.[5] Later on, this sort of problem became very serious and caused the plebeians' anger; Rome had to adjust its land policy from time to time, and more agrarian laws were issued.

The first law of real importance about the public land was the Licinian-Sextian law of 367 B.C., which proposed that "nobody should hold more than 500 jugera of public land, or pasture on it more than 100 cattle or 500 sheep."[6] The issuing of this law certainly implied that at the time some Romans had pastured more than 500 sheep or 100 oxen upon the public land or possessed more than

500 jugera of public land. Then in 232 B.C., Flaminius introduced a bill for the distribution of the Ager Gallicus and the Ager Picenus. This bill evidently was to help the plebeians obtain some public land. It naturally roused strong opposition among the nobles, who, according to Polybius, probably already possessed those lands.[7] Nevertheless, the bill eventually passed in the popular assembly. According to Livy, in 172 B.C., a revision of the holding of the land which had become state property after the conquest of Capua in the second Punic War was ordered by the Senate.[8] This land was regarded as the finest in that area, but those occupying the land had for some time failed to make the payments to the state and had regarded the land as their own. Some years later, in 133-123 B.C., the famous Gracchi brothers tried to settle the problems of the public land, but their reform was only partial and ended in a tragedy.

Although the Romans tried through such legislation to redistribute the public land more fairly, the deterioration of the public land-holding system grew worse after the Gracchi. Eventually, in 111 B.C., the Senate had to declare that all the public land which had been in private hands became the private property of the present owners, free of rent. From then on, the public land was rarely leased or opened as public pasture.

During the civil wars, the public land-holding system suffered the final blows. As has been mentioned, almost every ambitious general or politician during that time attacked the system of public land for his own purpose, just as Marius did in 100 B.C., and Caesar did in 59 B.C. Augustus made private use of the public land even more noticeably. As Augustus himself said in his Res Gestae, he established twenty-eight colonies in Italy and he paid out about Hs 600 million to buy land for his veterans in Italy.[9] Tenney Frank estimates that Augustus made some 200,000 assignments of land in Italy,[10] through which a great deal of the public land in Italy must have been transferred to private hands. No private owners could have offered so much land for sale, and those lands certainly were not from Augustus' own holdings. So, much of that land could have come only from the public source, although some minor portions may have come from private sources or from confiscations.

Another factor should also be noticed: Augustus brought peace to Rome. Once peace came, investment in Italian land came into vogue again, especially for Italian men of wealth. As Frank points out, "Augustus' rule was so firm that men began to feel once more that property in Italy was a safe investment."[11] Moreover, wars and confiscations had been two important ways for the Romans to extend the public land. Once peace came, and confiscation

was stopped by Augustus (after he had completely settled with his foes), the size of the public land could not be increased. After centuries of draining away the public land holdings, therefore, by the early Roman Empire the Roman public land was almost exhausted.

What percentage of the Italian cultivatable and pasture land was public land at any particular time, we really do not know. But Duncan-Jones, basing his calculation on a land list from the Ligures Baebiani inscription in southern Italy during the time of Trajan, estimates that the public land formed only 10 percent of the holdings among 66 estate-valuations. Another inscription shows that during the same period in northern Italy among 47 estate-valuations the public land made up almost a quarter (22 percent) of holdings in a list of lands owned by private individuals and the city of Veleia.[12] These two inscriptions prove that by the time of the beginning of the second century A.D. in northern Italy public land had gradually been transferred into private hands, and in southern Italy the amount of public land was very small.

We lack information about the public land holding in central Italy, but some common sense might be used for speculation. Surely, in central Italy the situation must have been even worse than in southern and northern Italy; for lands in central Italy must have been the first property people wanted to acquire, especially the lands in the areas

around Rome. Most of Augustus' twenty-eight colonies were located in northern Italy. If such lands had been available in central Italy, his veterans would not have wanted to go to the north, even less to the provinces. The shortage of the public land was obvious, even in Augustus' lifetime; otherwise, Augustus would not have wanted to confiscate the lands which belonged to private citizens such as Virgil in order to satisfy his veterans' land needs.[13]

In the peaceful reigns following that of Augustus, the confiscations and conquests had ceased; so new public lands were not acquired. Moreover, the land grants to veterans of a well organzied and stable professional army were regularly in the provinces rather than in Italy. Therefore, the amount of public land in Italy varied little during the first two centuries of the empire.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER II

[1]M. I. Finley, ed., The Studies in Roman Property (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 7.

[2]Appian, 1, 8-10.

[3]Appian, 1, 7.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Livy, XXVIII, 26. 4-6. Livy also records that some valuable land north of Capua was sold to private investors shortly before the end of the Hannibul War; Kenneth D. White, "Roman Agricultural Writers," Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, I.4 (New York: Walter DeGruyter, 1973), pp. 439-497.

[6]Appian, 1, 8.

[7]Polybius, ii.21.7.

[8]Livy, XXVI, 16.

[9]Augustus, Res Gestae Divi Augusti, Trans. by Frederick W. Shipley (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924), 16, 11.28.

[10]Tenney Frank, ed., An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, Vol. 5; Tenney Frank, Rome and Italy of the Empire (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 170.

[11]Frank, Rome and Italy of the Empire, p. 170.

[12]R. P. Duncan-Jones, "Some Configurations of Landholding in the Roman Empire," in Studies in Roman Property, ed. M. I. Finley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 7.

[13]Virgil, The Works of Virgil, Trans. by Davidson (New York: American Book Company); Georgics, 11, 198; Eclogues, 1.71, IX.19; see also Robert Seymour Conway, The Vergilian Age (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928), p. 32.

CHAPTER III

PRIVATE LAND HOLDINGS

By the time of the Roman Empire, most of the Italian lands were in private hands. It has been a broadly accepted theory that large private land holdings tended to increase in Italy following the last days of the Roman Republic.[1] Many people emphasize the importance of the large land holdings, but neglect the existence of the small peasant farms and the medium-sized land holdings.[2]

When we talk about the small private land holdings, we are talking about the holdings of those Italians who owned a small plot of land, and either depended on their own or their family members' labors to do their field work, or during the harvest season hired a couple of helpers, or even owned a couple of slaves. This type of land owner was almost self-sufficient. Such small peasant owners had been the core members of the Roman Republic. They were still the core members of the Roman Empire, and made up the great majority of the population[3] at least during the early Empire, although in many ways they were not as closely involved in military and political affairs of the state. But as a class, peasants with small farms did not

disappear, and the small land holdings also did not disappear, at least during the first two centuries A.D.

Unfortunately, most of our sources record accounts only of prominent men, and neglect the small ones; still some light is thrown on the small land owners and the small land holdings. For example, Varro tells us that during his time some Roman poor men still cultivated their own fields with their own labor and that of their families.[4] When Horace tells his readers how wealthy land holders tried to destroy the small farmers in Italy, his story at least proves that there were some small farmers with their own lands, whom the well-to-do were trying to attack. And, in fact, Horace does draw a very charming picture of Italian farm life, and portrays the farmer who was the lord of his own land which had been in his family possibly for generations.[5] Inscriptions also offer some information. In the land list of Ligures Baebiani, among the 66 estate-valuations, 14 percent of the poorest still owned 3.6 percent of land;[6] and in the Veleia list of valuation of 47 estates in northern Italy, 23.9 percent of the poorest farmers owned 5.1 percent of the land.[7]

Certainly, comparing these percentages of the amount of land and the number of the poorest population, we find that the poorest farmers' land holdings were very small. Moreover, under the early Empire, veterans' land holdings formed a great part of the number of small farms.

Reasonably, since every year so many soldiers were discharged from the legions, the land allotment assigned to an individual soldier could not be large, especially in Italy. M. I. Finley suggests that a Caesarian veteran with three children received only ten jugera of land.[8] Frank argues that since Augustus' final pension scheme was based on bonuses of about 12,000 sesterces, his land allotment could not have exceeded eight to ten jugera.[9] Duncan-Jones studied a land list in northern Africa and found that the average estate-size of veterans was only about 15-17 jugera, and he suggests that this size may be the standard estate-size for veterans.[10] There were twenty-eight colonies which were founded by Augustus for his veterans in Italy, and thousands of veterans obtained a plot of assigned Italian land. These grants, together with the holdings of other small land owners, indicate that the importance of the small land holdings in Italy must not be neglected.

Scholars such as M. I. Finley propose that under the early Empire, the middle range of landed property is also worth study.[11] What type of land holdings should be regarded as the middle range? There is no certain size for it. Probably Horace's estate which provided the poet a comforatble life and eight slaves could be counted as one of the middle range.[12] Such kind of land holding was more than those self-sufficient small holdings, but

much less than those large holdings which were worth millions of sesterces. The farms around Pompeii provide another example well worth study by modern archaeology. According to Frank, Carrington, in his study of the Pompeian farms, suggests that using the evidence of the farm at Boscoreale, which had the largest number of wine jars (about 80 jars, which could hold only about 160 calle of wine: about 84,000 liters, evidently the vintage for one year), one can estimate that the vineyard could hardly have been over forty jugera. More likely, it did not exceed ten to fifteen jugera.[13]

Concerning the large private land holdings under the early Empire, a range of questions needs to be considered. Although large private land holdings tended to increase during the early Empire, we should be careful about over stressing such holdings in Italy. Italy was the place where almost every Italian wanted to own a plot of land. After centuries of land distributions and redistributions in Italy, it was very hard to concentrate lands into only a few people's hands. This may be why many big land holders owned their landed properties, not in one region, but in several different areas, in Italy and even in the provinces. Additionally, those big land owners' properties in Italy (if we do not include the imperial properties) usually were obtained either from inheritances

or through marriages and then were extended by purchases.[14] In this way, land was difficult to concentrate. Normally a family's property would be shared by children, especially by sons; the Romans also liked to use landed property as dowry for their daughters.

As always, we should be concerned about the reliability of sources, especially how seriously we can depend on the famous "Latifundia perdidere Italian,"[15] which is quoted most by people who stress the role of large private land holdings in Italian agriculture. It is not wise to neglect the tendency toward latifundia in Italy, but it is doubtful whether it was as serious as Pliny the Elder says. Actually, it is quite possible, as Duncan-Jones suggests, that the elder Pliny's much-discussed description of great estates as being the ruin of Italy was in large part an expression of his dislike of cultivation by chained slaves. Certainly in the rest of Pliny the Elder's thirty-seven books, he says hardly anything to prove this single quotation. Other ancient agricultural authors such as Varro and Columella do not mention such a problem. Pliny the Elder's view may have been based on "a moralist's feeling more than an historian or an economist's judgment."[16]

Overall, precise dating is important in considering the evidence for latifundia in Italy, certainly latifundia were more extensive in the later Empire. However, the first

serious symptoms of the decline of Italian agriculture and the growth of latifundia appeared with the Punic wars. Especially after the second Punic War, the depopulation of many districts gave a number of rich nobles the opportunities of extending their estates. Various other causes subsequently contributed to the extension of the latifundia. As a result of the Roman conquests, there were large tracts of land in southern Italy and other regions for distribution;[17] and, as always, the Patricians were highly favored. The appearance of latifundia also was due to the importation of cheap grain into Italy from Sicily and northern Africa, as Rome conquered the areas. And it was due to the wider adoption of slave laborers in agriculture.

On the whole, since the last century of the Roman Republic, large private land holdings were being gradually formed in Italy and in the provinces. And most of the large private land holdings were in the senatorial aristocracy's hands. Duncan-Jones, in a list of the size of private fortunes under the early Roman Empire. (See Appendix.) gives us a clear picture of who the big land owners were.[18]

The gradual concentration of landed property in Italy is proved by some inscriptions, but those inscriptions mostly are dated in the second century A.D., not the first century A.D. For example, the inscription of 57 estate valuations from Ligures Baebiani dated in 101 A.D. tells

us that at the top of the scale 3.5 percent of the landowners owned 21.3 percent of the land, and the wealthiest single individual owned 11.2 percent of the land. At the bottom, the poorest 14 percent owned only 3.6 percent of the land.[19] On the Veleian land-list which also was dated in Trajan's time, at the top of the scale, the biggest private estate accounted for 12.4 percent of the wealth, while at the bottom 23.9 percent of the owners accounted for only 5.1 percent of the land among 47 estate valuations.[20] Moreover, Tenney Frank estimates that the Veleian inscription of 671 lines contained the offers of fifty-two owners to mortgage property valued at some 13,500,000 sesterces; the average value was, therefore, almost 260,000 sesterces and the average farm size would have been about 130 jugera. The largest of the estates that were worth 1,600,000 sesterces, several of the small ones were worth about 50,000 sesterces. The Veleian inscription also shows a very important fact, that in about a hundred years 323 separate farms had been concentrated into the hands of fifty-two owners.[21] This well exemplified the trend toward land concentration and the growth of Latifundia.

A fragment of another inscription which was found at Beneventum, offers additional evidence that eighty-nine original properties had fallen into the hands of fifty owners, and one man had gained the ownership of eleven farms. The largest farm recorded there was valued at

500,000 sesterces. Twelve were between that sum and 100,000; seventeen between 100,000 and 50,000; and twenty between 50,000 and 15,000. Frank estimates that at ordinary land values, the farms mentioned in that inscription would range from about 6 to 200 Jugera, about 4 to 130 acres.[22] And, Frank points out that, as usual, this inscription did not record the smaller farms or small garden plots which surely existed around those big estates.

Actually, ancient agricultural authors hardly tell us about the size of estates. Our information from them is very fragmentary and meager. The earliest information about the large private land holding comes from Cicero and Varro at the end of the Republic. In a letter to Atticus, Cicero mentions that "C. Albanius a very close neighbour of his brought 1,000 jugera of land from M. Pilius for Hs. 11,500,000."[23] Varro writes that a Roman knight, Gaberius had a place containing 1,000 jugera near the city.[24] Then Horace mentions an estate of this size at Falerii in his Epode ". . . by the magistrate's command, with corn a thousand acres load. . . ."[25] A couple of smaller estates also appear in the ancient agricultural writers. Varro mentions a 200 jugera estate at Reate which belonged to a senator named Q. Axius.[26] Pliny the Elder records that one of the vineyards at Nomentum owned by Acilius Sthenelus during Nero's reign was 60 jugera, and another vineyard

of Acilius Sthenelus at Nomentum, which later was bought by Seneca, was about 360 jugera.[27] He also paid about 1,600,000 sesterces for Palaemon's vineyard of about 230 jugera near Nomentum.[28] In sum, it is recorded that Seneca owned properties worth 300,000,000 sesterces, much of which lay in Italian and provincial estates. Of our famous ancient agricultural authors, Varro certainly was a sizeable farm owner; Columella was an owner of several estates in three different areas; and Pliny the Elder was a large land owner, from whom Pliny the Younger inherited a part of his property; finally, Pliny the Younger was the owner of at least two big estates.

Modern scholars like to prove the trend toward land concentration through the comparison of the different work loads and manpower ratios of Cato and other later ancient writers, like Columella. For example, Frank suggests that for the olive orchard, Columella assumes ninety laborers as necessary.[29] Since Cato needed but fourteen for an orchard of 240 Jugera, Columella seems to posit a standard orchard of about 1500 Jugera.[30] Such comparisons might help us in some ways to see the different ideas of those ancient writers about management, but whether it could indicate the increase of land concentration is a debatable question, since Cato and Columella lived in two different ages. Although in ancient times agricultural technique

did not develop as quickly as in modern times, during the course of 200 years of the Roman conquest over the Mediterranean world and the assimilation of the Hellenistic cultures, the Italian agricultural technique certainly developed in certain aspects.

In Cato's time, although he mentions slave laborers in his On Agriculture,[31] slave laborers in agriculture were not as common as in Columella's time. Moreover, in Columella's time, some chained slaves were used in agriculture. Such slave laborers certainly had less devotion to work than a freeman; and a slave's productivity was lower than that of a freeman. But, when we compare work loads and man-power ratios in Cato and in later agricultural authors, we have to consider the soil, weather, and other regional differences. Columella, himself, understood these differences very well, saying that a good farmer should "study zealously the manuals of the ancients, gauging the opinions and teachings of each of them, to see whether the records handed down by his forefathers are suited in their entirely to the husbandry of his day or are out of keeping in some respects. For I have found that many authorities now worthy of remembrance were convinced that with the long wasting of the ages, weather and climate undergo a change. . . ."[32] In still another paragraph, Columella notes an instance for

"Tremelius, who though he brings this very charge, provides the excuse that the soil and the climate of Italy and Africa, being of a different nature, cannot produce the same results."[33] Columella also suggests that people should be willing to learn from their ancestors, for in the works of the ancients far more was found to merit their approval than their rejection.[34]

Therefore, our epigraphic and literary sources which refer to the large private land holdings give us chiefly some general pictures. Our only information providing details for an individual large land holder was about Pliny the Younger in the early second century A.D. In general, Pliny the Younger was not the richest senator of the early Roman Empire. His estates lay only in Italy, whereas other senators owned landed properties not only in Italy, but also in the provinces. From his own comments, Pliny the Younger might have possessed about Hs. 17 million,[35] and like most Roman aristocrats he drew his main wealth from landed properties. Several other contemporary senators, such as Cn. Cornelius Lentulus, Q. Vibius Crispus, L. Annaeus Seneca, and Passienus Crispus had their properties in hundreds of millions of sesterces.[36] Nevertheless, Pliny the Younger was a typical example of an Italian large private land owner. His land holding was obtained by a combination of marriages and inheritances.

His family belonged to the landed municipal gentry of Comum in the Cisalpine region of North Italy.[37] He inherited one "equestrian fortune" from his uncle, Pliny the Elder, two "municipal fortunes" from his father and mother, and his three marriages surely enlarged his properties. Like many Italian large-land owners, Pliny the Younger owned properties in different regions. One of his letters tells us that he owned several estates near Lake Como, besides those he inherited from his parents.[38] He also owned property near Tifernum Tiberinum, a town in Umbria, and his property at Tifernum brought in more than 400,000 sesterces per year in the early reign of Trajan.[39] In addition, he owned villas and houses near Rome or in other Italian regions, and hundreds of slaves and had hundreds of freedmen. Moreover, his landed property and the wealth which was drawn from the property not only provided him a rich life, but also secured his position in the senatorial rank. Remember, even in the second century A.D., landed property still was one of the essential qualification of a senator.

We may now conclude that along with the growth of the land concentration in Italy during the first two century A.D., small and middle range land holdings existed, and they were the base of the Italian economy. Large land holding, although it had increased since the last century of the Roman Republic, did not become prominent until the

second century A.D,[40] according to our sources. And, more importantly, the role of large land holding in the Italian agriculture should not be exaggerated during the early Rome Empire. More information is required to prove its real significance.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER III

[1]Columella wrote chiefly for large land holders. Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. v, pp. 168 & 174; Duncan Jones, The Economy of the Roman Empire, pp. 343-44.

[2]Ramsay MacMullen, "Peasants During the Principate," Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, II, I, pp. 253-261.

[3]Ibid., p. 253.

[4]Varro, On Agriculture, Trans. by William Davis Hooper, Revised by Harrison Boyd Ash, (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1934), I, 17, 2.

[5]Horace, The Complete Works of Horace, ed. with an introduction by Casper J. Kraemer Jr. (New York: Modern Library, 1936), p. 89, Epodes, 2.

[6]Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, p. 15.

[7]Ibid., p. 16.

[8]M. I. Finley, The Ancient Economy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 105.

[9]Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. 5, p. 170.

[10]Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, p. 15.

[11]Finley, The Ancient Economy, p. 105.

[12]Horace, The Complete Work of Horace, Epistles I.14.

[13]Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. 5, p. 172.

[14]Duncan-Jones, Economy of the Roman Empire, p. 323.

[15]Pliny the Elder, N.H. 18.35.

[16]Duncan-Jones, Economy of the Roman Empire, p. 323.

[17]Kenneth Douglas White, "Roman Agricultural Writer," Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, 1, 4, p. 444.

[18]Duncan-Jones, Economy of the Roman Empire, pp. 343-344.

[19]Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, p. 15; C. I. L., IX 1455.

[20]Ibid., p. 17.

[21]Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. 5, p. 173.

[22]Ibid., p. 174.

[23]Cicero, Atticus, XIII.30.

[24]Varro, On Agriculture, II, 3.10.

[25]Horace, The Complete Work of Horace, Epodes, 4.

[26]Varro, On Agriculture, III, 2, 16.

[27]Pliny the Elder, N.H. 14. 48-51; Duncan Jones, Economy of Roman Empire, p. 324.

[28]Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. 5, p. 172.

[29]Columella, On Agriculture, Trans. by Harrison Boyd Ash, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1941), 12.52, 11-12.

[30]Duncan-Jones, The Economic History of the Rome Empire, p. 324; Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. 5, p. 171.

[31]Cato, On Agriculture, V.

[32]Columella, 1, 4-6.

[33]Ibid., 1, 1.6.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Pliny, The Letters of Pliny the Younger, 3.19.8.

[36]Seneca, De Ben, 2.27; Dio Cassius, 61.10.3; Duncan Jones, The Economic History of the Roman Empire, p. 17.

[37]A. N. Sherwin-White, The Letters of Pliny (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 69.

[38]Pliny, The Letters of the Younger Pliny, 7, 11.

[39]Pliny, The Letters of the Younger Pliny, 10.8.

[40]Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. 5, p. 175.

CHAPTER IV

IMPERIAL ESTATES

Imperial estates were the product of the Roman Empire. They did not appear in Italy or in the provinces until 26 A.D. because the ideal of an imperial family did not appear until 26 A.D. An inscription dated in July 26 A.D. is the earliest monument in which the idea of a Roman imperial family can be traced.[1]

Most of the imperial estates were located in provinces, especially in Egypt, and exactly what kind of land belonged to this type of holding was very complicated. In general, it included those estates which were owned by the imperial family members, and those granted by the emperors to their favorite persons including their assistants or even favorite slaves and freedmen.

The emergence and the extension of the imperial estates went along with the growth of imperialism, and with the strength and the stablization of the imperial power. We do not hear anything about how Augustus or even Tiberius bought or retained any Italian land for himself, although Suetonius tells us that Caesar was said to have left Octavian three-fourths of his private

estates which were estimated at 75,000,000 sesterces,[2] and that later, Augustus willed his chief heir Tiberius two-thirds of the estates, and Livia, one third.[3] Tacitus records about Tiberius that, "The emperor had only a few estates in Italy, slaves on a moderate scale, and his household was confined to a few freedmen. . . ."[4] However, we do not even know where Augustus' properties were located.

According to Dorothy J. Crawford, during Augustus' lifetime, he also inherited some estates from other people. For example, he inherited the estates of Agrippa in the Thracian Chersonese; and in a fragment of an inscription Augustus is reported to have inherited another plot of land in Campania, and one at Coela in Thrace. There the property remained in the imperial hands even in 55 A.D.[5] Besides inheritance, confiscation was another important source for the imperial estates.

Egypt was commonly regarded as the imperial province and the greater part of the early imperial estates were located there. But as Dorothy J. Crawford suggests, we do not have any document which can prove that Augustus personally held imperial estates there, although "his wife, his friends and associates, men such as Maecenas, or Lurius," were the owners of estates in Egypt. Only from Tiberius' region on "were the Julio-Claudian Emperors all attested as land holders in Egypt."[6]

After Claudius, especially after Nero, the imperial estates extended rapidly. For example, Pliny the Elder accused Domitian of seeking almost a monopoly of landed wealth in Italy.[7] But still, most of the imperial estates were in the provinces.

We have only some fragmentary sources about the imperial estates in Italy. For example, an inscription states that Nero's friend Acte obtained a plot of imperial land in Italy.[8] Another inscription mentions that a Vespasian slave villicus managed a group of imperial estates for which we do not know the location.[9] Dorothy J. Crawford records from the Liber Coloniarum several plots of imperial land which belonged to the Emperor Vespasian at Abella, in Campania and at Lanuvium.[10] In the land list of Veleia, the emperor is named as a neighbor four times.[11]

In sum, despite some limited amount of information about the imperial estates in Italy during the early Empire scattered among inscriptions,[12] to draw a clear picture of the imperial estates in Italy during the early Roman Empire requires more information and study.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER IV

[1]G. McN. Rushforth, Latin Historical Inscriptions (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 42.

[2]Suetonius, Julius Caesar, 83.

[3]Ibid, Augustus, 101. Frank, An Economic Survey, p. 16.

[4]Tacitus, The Annals, 4.7.

[5]Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, pp. 42-43.

[6]Ibid., p. 41.

[7]Pliny, Paneg. 50.

[8]Theodor Mommsen, ed., Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (Berlin: George Reimer, 1893), Vol. 6, Part 2, 15027.

[9]C. I. L. Vol. VI, 276; Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, p. 50.

[10]Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, p. 50.

[11]C. I. L., Vol. XI. 1147; Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, p. 67.

[12]Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, pp. 67-69.

CHAPTER V

URBAN PROPERTY

Although urban property was not agricultural land, and compared with agricultural land was relatively small, it formed an important aspect of the Italian land holding.

Central Italy provided the urban regions where most Italian upper classes, including large agricultural land lords, resided. Although urban properties were not as valuable as agricultural lands to the Italians, they were still a type of landed property and, as such, naturally attracted some Italian aristocracy.

The Romans started to invest in urban property during the late Republican period,[1] and most of the urban properties were controlled by a group of aristocrats, not by urban businessmen or merchants. Quite a few of the Roman aristocracy (for instance, Cicero, Cicero's brother Quintus,[2] his friends Atticus, L. Lucceius, M. Caelius Rufus,[3] and his enemy Clodius)[4] invested in urban property. Furthermore, Plutarch tells how M. Crassus became the largest urban property owner in the Roman history.[5]

During the early imperial period, urban property still was dominated by the aristocracy, but the owners were

various. As Frier suggests, at the top, the great Julio-Claudian family owned many insularii.[6] Below that rank, some nobles and rich family members owned urban property. Two inscriptions mention the insula owner M. Vettius Bolanus who probably was the suffect consul of A.D. 66.[7] Martial in the late first century A.D. frequently mentions some upper class Italians who owned urban properties in Italy. For example, Martial, describes a rich Roman by saying, "I own, in manors you have large command; and rich in houses are, as well as land, you have in mortgages a vast estate. . . ."[8] In the lowest rank, some freedmen or even slaves could also own urban property, which they might have obtained from the Emperor or other masters as gifts for their good services.[9] In addition, according to Cicero, urban property was also used as dowries. Thus, women in some ways shared the ownership of the urban property in Italy.[10]

In general, there were two categories of urban investments in Italy. One was the investment in urban apartment houses from which the owners collected rents as a part of their income. The other category was ownership for personal use.

During the first two centuries of the Roman Empire, along with the development and prosperity of cities in Italy, urban investment, especially investment in rental

houses, increased. Both modern archaeology and ancient literary sources offer us some information about that. For example, the excavation of Ostia provides evidence that during the first and especially during the second century A.D., Ostia enjoyed a gradual development and prosperity. Along with the prosperity, Ostia also enjoyed the increased investment in urban property. The most exciting discovery at Ostia showed the ruins of many houses and rental apartments which, as Bruce Frier describes, "have an astonishingly modern look and 'feel.'"[11] Scholars have found that in Ostia all of those numerous beautiful houses and apartments were well-built and well-planned.[12] It proves that during the early Roman Empire, especially in the second century A.D. onward, investment in urban rental property was flourishing.

Ancient literary sources also frequently mention apartment houses and tenants. According to Suetonius, Augustus "had a habit of watching the games from the upper rooms of houses overlooking the circus, which belonged to his friends or freedmen."[13] Suetonius also records that "Tiberius degraded a senator on hearing that he had left Rome just before the first of July, (the date for renting and letting houses and rooms) in order to secure a house at a cheaper rental later on, when there would be less demand."[14] Again, Martial records a rich Italian's words, "from my lodging-houses and farms I receive three millions.

. . . then from my lands do come my flocks and city rents, a vaster sum."[15]

Scholars, like Bruce W. Frier, believe that during the reign of Nero, especially after the Great Fire of 64 A.D. in Rome, when many houses were destroyed, the investment in urban property increased. Usually renting a house was even cheaper than owning a house of one's own.[16] According to Suetonius' account of the future Emperor Vitellius in 68 A.D., after he had accepted Galba's appointment to the governorship of lower Germany, "when he was about to start, he was so short of funds for his travelling expenses, and in such low water generally--this is common knowledge--that he rented an attic for his wife and children at Rome, let his own house for the remainder of the year . . . to finance the journey."[17]

All such evidence indicates that, during the early Roman Empire, urban investment was very remunerative. Of course, investment in urban property held more risk than that in agricultural land. For example, Herodian notes that in A.D. 238, a great fire broke out at Rome and destroyed many rich men's houses and rental properties.[18] But, the profits from urban property were much higher than those from agricultural land. According to Bruce Frier, the profit rate of urban property was at least 43 percent higher than the usual return for farmland.[19] This was why, even though people knew the higher

risk, some Italians still were willing to put their money into urban investment.

However, at any time, investment in urban property should not be exaggerated. Through the whole of ancient Roman history, if the Italians had a choice for their investments, the first choice absolutely would be agricultural land. If we look back to the later Roman Republic, it is evident that urban investors, such as Cicero, Atticus, etc., were both agricultural owners and urban property owners, but their main interests were in the agricultural lands. During the early Roman Empire, according to Martial, many urban property owners were the owners of agricultural land, too. A rich man very proudly said that he was rich in both houses and land, and another rich man said that he received a vast sum of money from his lands and rents.[20] Clearly, urban property was only an aspect of the Italian land holding, and its income was only a part of an Italian land owner's revenue. We see hardly any professional urban landlord who depended only on the rent.

Another category of urban property ownership was holding urban houses from which the owners did not collect rents; rather, they used them personally, or just considered them as a sort of money investment. When it was necessary, or when the opportunity was good, the owners would sell them for cash. Many Italian nobles owned such properties which were mostly houses and villas. During the

early Roman Empire, almost all of the upper class, including those nobles who drew most of their revenues from agriculture, resided in Rome and the nearby Italian towns. Although Pompeii was far from Rome, it was representative of a busy, prosperous Italian town, most of whose residents made their comfortable livings from agriculture.

Pliny the Younger was a typical gentleman farmer and a typical nonrental urban property owner, who owned a number of houses and villas. Martial mentions one of Pliny the Younger's houses in Rome, on the Esquiline Hill,[21] and he owned another villa near Ostia at Laurentine which he mentions in several of his letters.[22] In one, he describes his Laurentine house in detail to his friend Gallus as a large, comfortable and very modern house. That house was seventeen miles from Rome. Pliny visited it frequently, and, according to Pliny, the upkeep of the house was not expensive.[23] Besides those houses, Pliny had four other villas at Tiber, Praeneste and Tusculum.[24]

In summary, during the first two centuries of the Roman Empire, urban landed property attracted many Italians, and Italian aristocrats were involved, in some degree, in urban landed properties. Some of them were the owners of rental houses, or their own urban houses and villas, or both. Urban landed property formed an important part of the Italian land holding.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER V

[1]Bruce W. Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 23; Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, p. 128.

[2]Cicero, ad, Atticum, I, 14.7.

[3]Ibid., I.7.3, I.6.9.

[4]Cicero, Pro Caelio 7, 17.

[5]Plutarch, Lives, Vol. 2, p. 273.

[6]Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome, p. 24.

[7]Ibid.; see also, C. I. L., Vol. 6, 65.67.

[8]Martial, Martial's Epigrams, III.31, IV.37. Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome, p. 24.

[9]C.I.L., Vol. 6, 9824.

[10]Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome, p. 25; Cicero, Ad Atticum, 15, 20.4.

[11]Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome, p. 5.

[12]Russell Meiggs, Roman Ostia, Chapter 1.

[13]Suetonius, Augustus, 45.

[14]Suetonius, Tiberius, 35.

[15]Martial, IV.37.

[16]Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome, p. 41.

[17]Suetonius, Vit. 7.

[18]Herodian, 7.12. 5-7.

[19]Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome, p. 22.

[20]Martial, III.31, IV.37.

[21]Martial, X.9.

[22]Pliny, 9.40, 2.17, 24.

[23]Ibid., 2.17.

[24]Ibid., 5.6, 45.

CHAPTER VI

THE MANAGEMENT OF LANDED PROPERTY

Most Romans were not only good farmers, but also good farm managers, especially during the first two centuries of the Roman Empire. The Romans had already developed some skills in scientific management. For example, the famous agricultural author, Columella advises that

> One who devotes himself to agriculture should understand that he must call to his assistance these most fundamental resources--knowledge of the subject, means for defraying the expense, and the will to do the work. For in the end, as Tremellius remarks, he will have the best-tilled lands who has the knowledge, the wherewithal, and the will to cultivate them. For the knowledge and willingness will not suffice anyone without the means which the tasks require; on the other hand, the will to do or the ability to make the outlay will be of no use without knowledge of the art, since the main thing in every enterprise is to know what had to be done--and especially so in agriculture."[1]

During the first two centuries of the Roman Empire, however, in Italy, the management of agricultural land and landed urban property was somehow different from that of the Roman Republic.

In general, during the early Empire, public land was still cultivated either by state slaves or by private tenants. Most of public land was in private tenants' hands

for cultivation. Those private tenants leased the public land and paid a certain amount of rent. Normally, the rent for public land was low and the lease was long. For instance, as Duncan-Jones points out, city public land at Arausio was rented by private tenants under perpetual leases and for low rent.[2]

The management of private land holding was more complicated. Individual small farm owners, as usual, worked their fields themselves, and with their family members. During the harvest season, some extra hands might be hired, as the traditional Roman farmers had done during Cato's time.[3] Varro records that kind of farmer's existence during his time: "All agriculture is carried on by men--slaves, or freemen, or both; by freemen, when they till the ground themselves, as many poor people do with the help of their families; or hired hands, when the heavier farm operations, such as the vintage and the haying, are carried on by the hiring of freemen. . . ."[4]

Usually individual small farmers resided on their own lands or in the nearby countryside areas. They owned their own farm implements and they were almost self-sufficient. Horace provides a vivid picture of that type of farmer:

> How happy in his low degree, how rich in humble poverty is he who leads a quiet country life, discharged of business, void of strife, and from the griping scrivener free! Thus, ere the seeds of vice

> were sown, lived men in better ages born, who
> plowed with oxen of their own, their small
> paternal field of corn.[5]

Many veterans' lands were included in the small holdings. Like other small farmers, the veterans managed their lands personally and worked the acres by their own and their families' labors.

Horace, like many of his contemporary poets, was very much interested in agriculture, and was attentive to his properties. His descriptions about his Sabine estate give us the best evidence for the management of middle-sized land-holdings.[6] Horace received his Sabine estate as a gift from Maecenas. It was a plot of land which provided Horace a decent income and a very comfortable life. The poet drew much inspiration from his Sabine farm which he regarded as his most precious possession, as a haven of peace and contentment.[7] But, the management of his Sabine estate was not done by Horace personally, but by his steward, a slave.[8] Horace's Sabine estate consisted of two parts. One part was managed under Horace's name, but actually was run by eight slaves. This portion of the land was used for three different kinds of cultivations. One part was cultivated as a vineyard, another one as a fruit and vegetable garden, the third one, the largest, as a grain field. In addition, Horace's meadows and woods were used for feeding a large number of oxen, sheep, goats, and pigs. Another part of Horace's Sabine estate was divided into

five sections, rented by five tenants,[9] whose relations with Horace concerned the leases or contracts and the rents.

Horace's case tells us that medium-range landlords were different from small farmers, who worked with their own hands. Medium-sized landholders did not run their estates personally, and normally they were not resident on their farms, at least they did not reside there during the whole year. Most of the Pompeiians held middle-sized properties and drew most of their income from their lands, but they resided in a busy, prosperous town. In sum, the work of the management with regard to middle-sized farms was normally done either by slaves or through tenants.

Unlike small individual farmers who could produce only grain and probably a few vegetables and fruits for their family's needs, the medium-sized farms were not only used for grain production, but were also cultivated as vineyards and orchards. Vine and orchard culture was more profitable than that of grain. Among the Campanian and Pompeiian ruins many storerooms for wine and oil were discovered. Modern historians, such as Rostovtzeff, believe that both the Campanian and the Pompeiian land patterns belonged to the middle-sized holdings.[10]

Large property's management was entirely different from that of a small farm. In some ways it was similar to that of the medium-sized property, but it was much more complicated. In general, three different types of

management were used by large land holders. In the first type, many large farms were run by slave laborers and slave stewards. The use of slave laborers in agriculture was frequently mentioned by ancient agricultural authors. For example, Columella usually assumes that slaves did the farm work,[11] and that their work was terribly heavy. On wheat land, one slave laborer was required to plow a jugerum three time in four days, to harrow it in one day, to hoe it twice in three days, to weed it in one day, and to reap it in one and a half days.[12] Columella also states that two hundred jugera of land could be worked with two yoke of oxen, the same number of ploughmen, and six common laborers, provided it was free of trees.[13] The vine-dressers too had to do their work in company with others and under supervision.[14] According to both Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger, some slaves worked in very terrible conditions--wearing a chain. But Pliny the Younger declared that he never allowed that sort of slave to appear on his lands.[15]

Actually, slave laborers did not only the field work, but also the entire work of running a farm. Unlike Cato's time when during the harvest season some free helpers could be hired, in Columella's day everything from the harvest of fruit and grain, to wine, honey, and oil manufactures; from the repair of equipment and iron tools to the daily cares of the farm--was done by slave laborers.[16]

Slave women, according to Columella, were free from heavy work in different degrees according to the number of their children.

> To women, too, who are usually prolific, and who ought to be rewarded for the bearing of a certain number of offspring, I have granted exemption from work and sometimes even freedom after they had reared many children. For a mother of three sons, exemption from work was granted, to a mother of more, her freedom as well.[17]

For this type of management, usually a slave steward would be appointed who would be responsible to the land owner directly. All of the revenues from the farm would go directly to the land owner. However, slave management does not mean that slaves were free to run the farm. Columella does set up many rules and principles for slave stewards and laborers. For example, a slave

> should be not only skilled in the tasks of husbandry, but should also be endowed, as far as the servile disposition allows, with such qualities of feeling that he may exercise authority without laxness and without cruelty, and always humour some of the better hands, at the same time, being forebearing even with those of lesser worth, so that they may rather fear his sternness than detest his cruelty.[18]

And, Columella thinks that there is no better way of keeping watch over even the most worthless of men than by the strict enforcement of labor, by the requirement that the proper task be performed and by the presence of the overseer at all times; for with these precautions, the foremen in charge of the several operations are zealous in carrying

out their duties, and the workers, after their fatiguing toil, turn their attention to rest and sleep rather than to dissipation.[19] A slave steward, according to Columella,

> shall not employ the services of a fellow-slave except on the master's business; that he shall partake of no food except in sight of the household, nor of other food than is provided for the rest; . . . He shall permit no one to pass beyond the boundaries unless sent by himself, and he shall send no one except there is great and pressing need. He shall carry on no business on his own account, nor invest his master's funds in livestock and other goods for purchase and sale.[20]

However, Columella did not assume that slave labor was the only way of running a big farm. He mentions also another type of management of a big farm--the rental system. Columella advises the landlord

> On far distant estates, however, which it is not easy for the owner to visit, it is better for every kind of land to be under free farmers than under slave overseers, but this is particularly true of grain land. To such land a tenant farmer can do no greater harm, as he can to plantations of vines and trees, while slaves do it tremendous damage: they let out oxen for hire, and keep them and other animals poorly fed; they do not plough the ground carefully, and they charge up the sowing of far more seed than they have actually sown. . . . The result is that both manager and hands are offenders, and that the land pretty often gets a bad name. Therefore, my opinion is that an estate of this sort should be leased if, as I have said, it cannot have the presence of the owner.[21]

Here Columella not only points out the existence of the rental system, but also points out the reason that slave management was not suitable for every kind of cultivation. But for the rental system, Columella also has opinions:

> I myself remember having heard Publius Volusius, an old man who had been consul and was very wealthy, declare that estate most fortunate which had as tenants natives of the place, and held them, by reason of long association, even from the cradle, as if born on their own father's property. So I am decidedly of the opinion that repeating letting of a place is a bad thing, but that a worse thing is the farmer who lives in town and prefers to till the land through his slaves rather than by his own hand.[22]

It is obvious here that the tenant system was an option, but that using the country-born tenant was very important. Moreover, there was the possibility of two different kinds of tenant systems. One centered on the tenant who was from the city and preferred to work the land through slaves rather than with his own hands. The plot of land he rented must have been sizeable, so that some slave laborers were necessary. Another system included the tenant who just rented a plot of land and worked it with his own hands.

Pliny the Younger, who was a typical Roman large landlord, also mentions the rental system. In a letter Pliny the Younger tells his friend:

> I must stay here to arrange for letting my farms on long lease and I shall have to adopt a new system for this. During the past five years--despite the large reductions I made in the rents, the arrears have increased and as a result most of my tenants have lost interest in reducing their debt because they have no hope of being able to pay off the whole, they even seize and consume the produce of the land in the belief that they will gain nothing themselves by conserving it.[23]

From Columella and Pliny the Younger's information, we know that tenants rented the land under a certain lease, and that

the rent was paid chiefly in money. But in this same letter, Pliny also mentions that he wants to change a money rent system into a share-rental system.[24]

Besides the slave management and the rental system, another means of cultivating large agricultural estate was the contract system. In this system, the tenant rented a portion of land under a certain contract. Normally, the landlord had to supply the tenant with some slaves or some husbandry equipment. In a letter, in which Pliny the Younger discusses buying a large farm, he says:

> The last owner on more than one occasion sold up the tenants' possessions so that they temporarily reduced their arrears but weakened their resources for the future, and consequently their debts mounted up again. They will have to be set up and given a good type of slave, which will increase the expense; for I never employ chained slaves myself, and no one uses them here.[25]

In this letter, Pliny states that if he bought the farm, he would have to supply the tenants with slaves, and such purchases would be expensive for him. In another letter, Pliny tells his friend that he had to stay in one of his farms for a while to handle some problems, for the peasants claimed their right after his absence to vex his ears with their complaints.[26] The right Pliny's peasants claimed here might have focussed on some things in their contract which they had not received. Under the rental system, normally the tenants would supply themselves all of the necessary equipment, but, in this letter, those tenants might have

had special rights in their contract. Columella also mentions the relations between master and contractors.[27]

In sum, the Italian large landlords were normally the senatorial aristocracy, and they rarely resided on their lands. Most of them resided in Rome and other Italian cities, although some of them, such as Pliny the Younger, liked to travel frequently and temporarily stay on their estates. More importantly, none of the large farms' daily work of the management was done by the landlord personally, but was done either by slave stewards, or through a contractor or by tenants. The landowner, like Pliny the Younger, handled only the income and some serious problems which could not be solved by the stewards or tendants. For little known reasons, during the first two centuries of the Roman Empire, most of the large farms were tended to make money from wine, oil, or other profitable products.

The management of the imperial estates was in many ways similar to that of the private lands, especially that of the large properties. Like many large private agricultural lands, the imperial estates were also very commonly rented out to tenants to do the cultivative work under either short or long-term leases. The tenant system was normally used in the provinces, especially in Egypt.[28] In Italy, during the first two centuries A.D., the most popular system of managing the imperial estates was vilicus

management.[29] The vilicus was the representative of the Emperor, or the imperial family, who could be a slave, or a freedman, or a Roman citizen. A vilicus' job was to manage the imperial land which was assigned to him and to control the imperial slaves who worked on the imperial lands. The income of the imperial estates went directly to the Emperor. As time went on, the imperial estates expanded rapidly, and the income became more and more important in the Emperor's finance. When the Flavians reorganized the Julio-Claudian imperial estates system, a special fiscus was appointed to take charge of the revenue of the imperial estates.[30]

Urban landed property normally was managed by two types of system. One was the owner's direct management. The other one was through an agent as the middleman who took care of the daily management work, leasing, and other responsibilities. An agent of the urban property could be a slave or a freeman. Thus, an inscription from Pompeii records the case of a slave who acted as an owner's rental agent.[31]

Agent management was more popular during the first two centuries A.D., especially for those large urban property holders and for those landlords who owned not only agricultural lands, but also urban properties. An agent could save the landlord time, energy, and the trouble of

collecting delayed rents and dealing with law suits. Once a rental agent was hired, it was his responsibility to manage and to deal with the tenants. According to Frier, Cicero hired a rental agent to manage his urban properties in Rome and Puteoli.[32] Even for nonrental urban properties, like Pliny the Younger's urban houses and villas, someone probably an agent or an housekeeper, was employed to care for the house and the villas, when the owner was absent.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER VI

[1]Columella, On Agriculture, 1, 1.1-3.

[2]Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, p. 9.

[3]Cato, On Agriculture, CXLIV, CXLV.

[4]Varro, On Agriculture, I, XVII.

[5]Horace, The Complete Works of Horace, Epodes II, p. 89.

[6]Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, p. 59.

[7]Horace, Odes, I.17, II.18.

[8]Ibid., Epistles, I.14.

[9]Ibid., Epistles, I.14. K. D. White, Roman Farming (Syracuse: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 39; Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, p. 68.

[10]Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, p. 69.

[11]Columella, 1, 8.9; II, 1,20; II, 2, 40; Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. 5, p. 181.

[12]Columella, II.12.

[13]Ibid., II, 12.7.

[14]Ibid., I, 9.4.

[15]Pliny, 3.19.1.

[16]Columella, 1,8,8-10.

[17]Ibid., I, 8, 19; Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. V, p. 181.

[18]Columella, 1, 8.10.

[19]Ibid., 1, 8, 11.

[20]Ibid., 1, 8.12-13.

[21]Ibid., 1, 7.6-7.

[22]Ibid., 1, 7.3; Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. V, p. 178.

[23]Pliny, Letters, 9.37, 7.30.

[24]Ibid., 9.37.

[25]Ibid., 3.19; Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. 5, p. 179.

[26]Pliny, Letters, 7.30.

[27]Columella, 3.13.12.

[28]Finley, ed., Studies in Roman Property, p. 45.

[29]Ibid., p. 50.

[30]Ibid., p. 53.

[31]C. I. L. 4.138.

[32]Bruce Frier, "Cicero's Management of His Urban Properties," The Classical Journal, Vol. 74, 1978, p. 4.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The Italian land-holding system during the early Roman Empire (27 B.C.-A.D. 284) was not simply one of the aspects of the imperial economy. In many ways, it was closely related to the entire early imperial political stability, economic growth, and social mobility.

The public land was the inheritance from the Rome Republic. When the Roman state had belonged to every Roman, the public land was the symbol of the commonwealth, and it also represented a Roman's civic right, for only the Roman citizens could participate in the distribution of the public land. During the last century of the Roman Republic, Italy witnessed tremendous political and social disorders and changes; the Roman Republic was dying along with the Roman victories over the Mediterranean world. Along with the destruction of the Republican Constitution, the public land became the first target to be attacked, from Gracchus down to Augustus, as a result of the redistribution of power and property. This was the reason why, by the time of the early Roman Empire, most available Italian land was

in private hands. As time went on, the public land-holding system gradually disappeared reflecting the complete disappearance of the shattered Roman Republic.

Small land holding in Italy during the early Roman Empire depended on the Augustan political system. After Caesar's assassination, Augustus acted on the Roman political stage for fifty-nine years. Although he gradually grasped many different titles, such as "the father of his country," "princeps," etc.,[1] and gradually concentrated all of the political religious and administrative powers in his own hands, and although his new principles were absolutely contrary to the Roman Republican Constitution, Augustus never accepted any title which could openly hurt the Roman's traditional feelings, and he never openly challenged the name of the Roman Republic.[2] In addition, Augustus successfully made most Romans believe that he was trying to restore the Roman Republic. This was why during the early Roman Empire so many Romans tried to repair their fortunes as traditional self-sufficient farmers living on plots of land of their own. Augustus helped people to keep that dream. Through his land assignments many Romans did obtain or reobtain lands[3] and most of them became small farmers or medium-sized farm owners. Under Augustus, and at least during the first century A.D., the small and medium-sized farmers still constituted most of

the Italian population.[4] They remained the core members of the Roman Empire, although in many ways such farmers were quite different from what they had been during the early Republic. By this policy, Augustus not only satisfied the wishes of many Romans, but also provided himself and his successors a steady supply of soldiers.

Moreover, through Augustus' land assignments, twenty-eight new "coloniae" were established in Italy. Although those new "coloniae" were mainly used as economic instruments to make provision for old soldiers and for poor citizens alike, they also fulfilled a well-calculated strategic plan to settle old Roman soldiers in Italy, especially northern Italy, since Italy was the heart of the Empire. Part of the credit for the two centuries of Roman peace has to be given to these policies of Augustus.

Under the early Roman Empire a medium-sized landlord rank emerged in Italy, as a result of the conflict between Augustus' autocratic rule and the Roman senatorial aristocracy. During the Roman Republic, this senatorial aristocracy held not only the political power, but also the economic strength. Even under the Augustan regime, their power and strength remained unchanged, especially in Italy. Although Augustus divided the Empire into "imperial provinces," and "senatorial provinces," Italy and Rome, as

usual, remained in the senatorial aristocracy's hands and the treasury was under the senatorial aristocracy's control.[5]

To limit the Roman senatorial aristocracy's traditional power, Augustus and his successors established a bureaucratic governmental machinery by using chiefly equestrian and imperial freedmen as the administrators. Those people, not only politically joined the Augustan government, but also economically became a group of medium-sized landlords. Most of them were granted some lands by the Emperor, or bought the lands on their own, in order to strengthen their policial positions. Horace was an example. Although Horace was not one of Augustus' administrators, he admired Augustus, and was popular. The son of a freedman, he was granted some land and became a landlord of a mēdiūm-sized farm. Along with the growth of the imperial rule, this class of people's economic and political powers also were increasing, and they played a very important role in Roman imperial history.

After the establishment of the Roman Empire, the stability of the imperial rule constantly depended on the loyalty of the Roman soldiers, and the support of the populace. To keep the soldiers' loyalty and the populace's support cost a great deal of money; for Augustus and his successors had to buy such loyalty and support by paying for the construction of a large number of public works,

by providing jobs for many workers, by distributing the imperial revenue to a large number of citizens, and by allotting lands to the soldiers.[6] The emperor had to have private wealth, and the emperor's private wealth was very important in the running of the imperial state.[7]

From Augustus on, every imperial province had its fiscus for local taxes, and the troops were paid by those funds. However, as soldiers and the Roman public continued to require subsidies and years of peace meant less booty from conquests, taxes from the imperial provinces could not meet the needs of the imperial power and subsidies to the Romans. The imperial estates, therefore, were enlarged to help the Emperor to build his own finances and to buy the soldiers' and the civilian Romans' loyalty. Although we do not hear that Augustus and Tiberius owned any imperial estates in Italy, their successors certainly did. And the income of the imperial estates constantly increased as a very important part of the emperor's finance, and as an important part of the imperial treasury,[8] which the imperial rule so much depended on. After the Julio-Claudians, the imperial estates in Italy rapidly expanded. According to Duncan-Jones, by the time of Constantine, the churches of Rome were granted landed property in Italy and in Sicily from the imperial estates with rents worth about 15,000 solidi.[9]

Initially, the Roman Emperors had to have their imperial estates run by their faithful slaves or freedmen. They had to keep some distances between the State treasury and their own estates to avoid the Romans' confusing the emperors with the Hellenistic kings. Later, along with the growth of imperial power, the revenues of the imperial estates and the State Treasury often were intermingled and were used by the Emperors for any purpose they pleased. By Nero's time, the Emperor's accountant who used to take charge only of the Emperor's finances had become a public official, and the public property and income were already partly under his control.[10] Later, "most of the public resources were amalgamated with the Emperor's own patrimony, and all came under the control of the imperial 'fiscus.'"[11]

The final emergence of the large landholdings at the beginning of the second century A.D., was the symbol of a new stage of development of the Italian agricultural economy. On the large estates more scientific methods of management were used, and certainly the productivity was increased. On many large farms slave laborers were used during the early Roman Empire, especially during Varro and Columella's days. Although slave laborers might have less enthusiasm for their work than freedmen had, slave laborers cost the landlord little, and they could be assigned heavy chores. If they were well used and well organized, they were certainly the most profitable labor force.

Under slave management, a slave steward always was appointed. As Kenneth Douglas White points out: "in spite of his status, he was obviously the key man in the enterprise, on whose competence and loyalty depended its successful operation."[12] A steward was the middleman who carried out the master's orders and instructed the laborers directly. Both Varro and Columella pay attention to the important role a steward played in the management of a large agricultural estate. Varro states that:

> It is especially important that the foremen be men who are experienced in farm operations; for the foreman must not only give orders but also take part in the work, so that his subordinates may follow his example, and also understand that there is good reason for his being over them--the fact that he is superior to them in knowledge.[13]

Furthermore, Varro states:

> The good will of the foremen should be won by treating them (laborers) with some degree of consideration, and those of the hands who excel the others should also be consulted as to the work to be done. When this is done, they are less inclined to think that they are looked down upon, and rather think that they are held in some esteem by the master.[14]

Kenneth White suggests that here Varro set up an example of a labor-relations policy which has only recently gained widespread acceptance in modern industrial practice.[15] Although it is discussable whether Varro's statement contained the modern management aspect--a labor-relations policy--at least Varro and, later, Columella[16] did

represent a better and more scientific method of the management in terms of labor relations.

The system of renting a portion of the large land holdings symbolized the alteration of the traditional Italian agricultural structure in terms of the production relations. The "coloni" or tenants were not the traditional Roman self-sufficient farmers who owned a plot of land and worked on it with their own hands. The tenants were not the owners of the lands they cultivated, but the laborers of their landlords. The relations between the landlords and the tenants were regulated by certain leases or contracts. In sum, the landlords and the tenants had only a legal relationship. The traditional Italian peasants' interests were closely linked with those of the Roman state, for they were the voters, the soldiers, and the legal participants in the distribution of the public land. But the tenants' economic interests were linked with their landlords only through legal rights, and politically they did not care about the state as much as the traditional Italian peasants did. Although the lands the tenants cultivated did not belong to them, they did not need to worry about whether they might lose their lands as long as they had their leases or contracts. The lands which they were cultivating were under the landlords' protection. Some tenants even received their agricultural

equipment from the landlords. Normally, such big estate owners held not only economic strength, but also very important political power which served to protect their tenants.

The final emergence of the large agricultural estates during the early Roman Empire also symbolized the completion of the alteration of the traditional Italian agricultural structure. Italy had transformed its cereal culture to vines and orchards. Actually, as soon as the Romans settled down in Latium, they had found that most lands of central Italy were not well endowed for the production of cereals. So since the early Republican period, the Romans had gradually turned their attention to pasturage, and pasturage was becoming dominant in central Italy before the Punic wars.[17] While the Romans extended pasturage, they also began the shift to vineyards and orchards. By the beginning of the second century A.D. along with the final emergence of the large agricultural estates, vineyards and orchards had become dominant in Italian agriculture, for only large estates would provide the capital and manufacturing skills which wine and oil production required. The contemporary Italian agricultural writers certainly noted and recorded the change from cereal culture to vineyards and orchards. Columella speaks of ". . . Italy where the land is planted with vineyards and olives. . . ."[18] Pliny the Elder also states that in Cato's days, Italian

wine was hardly known outside of Italy; even during Caesar's time, the Romans had to import Greek wines for special festivals. But by Pliny's time many famous brands of wines had been produced in Italy. Pliny records that among eighty famous brands of wines, two-thirds of them were produced in Italy.[19]

The prosperity of the urban investment during the early Roman Empire represented another aspect of the Augustan policy. Augustus and his successors paid much attention to the growth of the Italian cities. Indeed, Augustus claimed that he had turned a brick Rome into a marble Rome. Especially attracted by Augustus' "bread and games,"[20] policy, the Italian urban population increased rapidly. About 200,000 Romans received free grain in Rome during Augustus' regime.[21] The increased urban population, two hundred years of peace, the growth of Italian agriculture, especially the growth of vineyards and orchards, all caused industry and commerce also to grow rapidly in Italy. Many harbors were required and opened. All of these factors stimulated the development of the Roman cities, and the development of the cities stimulated the increase in urban investment. For instance, Ostia's great prosperity was the direct result of Trajan's harbor. And most Ostian apartment house remains can be dated to the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century A.D.

Another factor also contributed to the increased urban investment. During the early Roman Empire, it was the common fashion for the upper class Roman, especially the land-owning senatorial aristocracy to reside in Rome. Caesar's fate had taught Augustus the wisdom of continuing the policy of making the Romans the masters of the Empire and the provincals the subjects.[22] Italy, especially Rome, was the heart of the Empire; to be the masters, the aristocracy had to reside in Rome. Since many upper class people such as Cicero and Pliny the Younger liked to travel around, for convenience, they also kept houses and villas in different regions.

Actually in Italy, as Bolkestein suggests for later ages,

> not only the bigger landowners lived away from their estates; the main part of the farmers was not scattered in solitary farms; this condition, which still prevails in southern Italy and Sicily, may elucidate the ancient situation. There are found, at distances, varying between three and twenty miles, towns with some 20,000 to 70,000 inhabitants, while in between there are not settlements except some cottages and barns, our hamlets and scattered farms are unknown. Only 11 percent of the population of Sicily live in the country--a quaint phenomenon for a state subsisting in the main on agriculture.[23]

So, too, during the early Roman Empire, agricultural people made up the majority population of the Italian towns, and large landlords concentrated in the capital--Rome.

In sum, from the first century A.D., up to at least the middle of the second century A.D., Italy did

witness economic prosperity, and relative political and social stability. The prosperity and stability, in so many ways, were related to the Italian land-holding system.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER VII

[1]Augustus, Res Gestae, 1, 7. VI, 35.

[2]Ibid., 1, 5.

[3]Ibid., 1, 3.

[4]Ramsay MacMullen, "Peasants during the Principate," Aufstieg und Neidergang der Römischen Welt, II, 1, p. 253.

[5]Starr, A History of the Ancient World, p. 553.

[6]Augustus, Res Gestae, IV, 19-20, III, 15 III, 16 III, 18, IV. 22-23. M. K. Thornton, "Augustan tradition and Neronian Economics," Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, II.1, p. 150.

[7]F. Millar, "The fiscus in the First Two Centuries," Journal of Roman Studies, LIII (1963), p. 29.

[8]P. A. Brunt, "The 'Fiscus' and Its Development," Journal of Roman Studies LVI (1966), p. 82.

[9]Finley, ed., Studies of Roman Property, p. 8.

[10]Brunt, "The 'Fiscus' in Its Development," p. 78.

[11]Ibid., p. 85.

[12]White, "Roman Agricultural Writers," Aufstieg und Neidergang der Römischen Welt, I. 4. Berlin: Walter DeGruyter, 1973, p. 455.

[13]Varro, On Agriculture, 1, 17.5.

[14]Ibid., 1, 17. 6-7.

[15]White, "Roman Agricultural Writers," p. 463.

[16]Columella, 1, 7, 10-11.

[17]White, "Roman Agricultural Writers," pp. 443-444.

[18]Columella, II, 24.

[19]Pliny, N.H. 14. 87. Frank, An Economic Survey, Vol. 5, p. 146.

[20]Augustus, Res Gestae, III, 15,18, IV. 22, 23.

[21]Ibid., IV, 22, 23,

[22]Starr, A History of the Ancient World, p. 556.

[23]H. Bolkestein, Economic Life in Greece's Golden Age (Leiden, 1958), p. 21.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE SIZE OF PRIVATE FORTUNES UNDER THE PRINCIPATE

The fortunes in the list belonged to senators (or to members of senatorial families) with the following exceptions, marked with an asterisk below: Nos. 2, 6, 7, 10 (imperial freedmen); 16 (private freedman); 14, 25-8 (provincial magnates, sometimes equestrian); 19, 19a, 22 (physicians); 23 (court poet). The largest private fortune of the Republic (excluding Sulla and Pompey) amounted to HS_{200} million (M. Crassus, Pliny NH 33.134).

1. HS_{400} million, Cn. Cornelius Lentulus (died, A.D. 15). Seneca de ben. 2.27; Suetonius Tib. 49.I ('census maximus fuit'), PIR^2C 1379.

2.* HS_{400} million, Narcissus, freedman of Claudius (died A.D. 54), Cassius Dio 60.34 PIR^1N18.

3. (More than HS_{300} million, because richer than Seneca), L. Volusius Saturninus (died A.D. 56). Tacitus Ann. 14.56.I; 13.30.I. Cf. 3.30.I PIR^1v 661.

4. HS_{300} million, L. Annaeus Seneca (died A.D. 65). Tacitus Ann. 13.42; Cassius Dio 61.10.3 PIR^2 A 617.

5. HS_{300} million, Q. Vibius Crispus (died c. A.D. 83/93). Tacitus Dial. 8; cf. Martial 4.54-7 PIR^1 V 379.

6.* HS_{300} million, M. Antonius Pallas (died A.D. 62). Tacitus Ann. 12.53. PIR^2 A 858.

7.* (HS300-HS200 million?), C. Iulius Licinus (died after A.D. 14). Juvenal 1.109 (his wealth comparable with that of Pallas, No. 6 above); Seneca Ep. 119.9, cf. 120.19 (his wealth comparable with that of Crassus [HS200 million. Pliny NH 33.134). PIR^2 I 381.

8. The largest pirvate fortune of the early second centurn A.D. was less than HS288 million. Plutarch, v. Public. 15.3.

9. HS280 million, private wealth of the Emperor Tacitus (Before A.D. 275). HA Tac. 10 PIR^2 C 1036.

10.* More than HS 200 million, C. Iulius Callistus (died c. A.D. 52). Pliny NH 33.134. PIR^2 I 229.

11. HS200 million, T. Clodius Eprius Marcellus (died c. A.D. 79). Tacitus Dial. 8. PIR^2 E 84.

12. HS 200 million. C. Sallustius Passienus Crispus (died c. A.D. 46.7, Syme. 32 n.12). Suetonius v. Pass. Crips. PIR^1P 109 with AE 1924, 72.

13. HS110 million, M. Gavius Apicius (died after A.D. 28). Seneca ad helv. 10, Martial 3.22 (HS70 million alleged). PIR^2G 91.

14.* HS100 million, Ti. Claudius Hipparchus of Athens, gradfather of Herodus Atticus (died after A.D. 81). Suetonius Vesp. 13. PIR^2 C 889.

15. HS100 million, L. Tarius Rufus (31 B.C./A.D. 14). Pliny NH 18.37. PIR^1 T14.

16.* HS60 million, C. Caecilius Isidorus (died 8 B.C.). Also bequeathed 4,116 slaves and 257,000 herd animals. Pliny NH 33.135. PIR^2 C 50.

17. HS60 million (in part anticipated), M. Aquillius Regulus (died c. A.D. 105, Syme 102). Pliny Ep. 2.20.13. PIR^2 A 1005.

18. More than HS40 million, Lollia Paulina (died A.D. 49). Pliny NH 9.117-18. PIR^2L 328.

19.* HS30 million, C. Stertinius Xenophon and Q. Stertinius (joint estate; c. A.D. 41 54). Pliny NH 29.7-8. PIR^1 S 658; 666.

20. HS20 million, a "moderate" fortune under Marcus Aurelius. Galen 13.636 (Kuhn).

21. c. HS20 million, C. Plinius Caecilius Secundus (died c. A.D. 111/13). See pp. 20-32 above PIR^1 P 370.

22.* Nearly HS20 million, Crinas of Massilia (c. A.D. 54/68). Pliny NH 29.9 RE 11.1865.

23.* HS10 million, P. Vergilius Maro (died 19 B.C.). Donatus v. Verg. 13; Probus v. Verg. 16. PIR^1 V 279.

24. More than HS 5 million, M. Calpurnius Piso (in A.D. 20). Tacitus Ann. 3.17 PIR^{2}C 296.

25.* HS4 million, Aemilia Pudentilla of Oea (in A.D. 158/9). Apuleius Apol. 71:77, PIR^{2}A 425.

26.* HS4 million, C. Licinius Marinus Voconius Romanus of Saguntum (c. A.D. 98 100). Pliny Ep. 10.4.2. PIR^2 L 210.

27.* HS3 million, Herennius Rufinus of Oea (A.D. 158/9). Apuleius Apol. 75. PIR^2 H 123.

28.* HS2 million, L. Apuleius of Madauros (father of the novelist; c. A.D. 140/50). Apuleius Apol. 23.

29. HS1,800,000 (or more), M. Hortensius Hortalus (died after A.D. 16). Tacitus Ann. 2.37-8. PIR^2 H210.

Source: This is a list from Duncan-Jones, The Economy of the Roman Empire, pp. 343-344.

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