CHAPTER 7

Roman Revolutions

Sir Ronald Syme published *The Roman Revolution* in 1939. He was thirty-six at the time, still two decades shy of the knighthood conferred upon him in part because of that book, a masterwork of Roman history and historiography. 1939, of course, was an inauspicious year to publish an academic book of any sort, much less one about the fall of the Roman Republic and the dawn of a new era of autocratic rulers called "generals" (*imperatores*), whom we now call, rather more politely, "emperors." In Europe, 1939 marked milestones for militaristic demagogues like Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco: Hitler invaded Poland; Franco, victorious in his own Civil War, embarked upon what turned out to be a thirty-year dictatorship in Spain; Mussolini, as part of several policy battles he was waging on the Italian home front, delivered a rousing speech on agrarian reform in which he laid out a national plan for food security and Italian self-sufficiency. Then he invaded Albania.

I first read Syme aged 20 as an undergraduate studying Classics. I was struck, like many readers then, at publication, and now, by the sheer majesty of Syme's scholarship, his terse, idiosyncratic prose, and the bleak implications of his outlook and interpretation of the past. "The rule of Augustus brought manifold blessings to Rome," Syme writes in his opening pages. "Yet this new dispensation . . . was the work of fraud and bloodshed, based upon the seizure of power and redistribution of property by a revolutionary leader." "In the beginning kings ruled at Rome," he continues a few pages later, "and in the end, as was fated, it came round to monarchy again. Monarchy brought concord. During the Civil Wars every party and every leader professed to be defending the cause of liberty and of peace. Those ideals were incompatible. When peace came, it was the peace of despotism." And finally, this verdict on the *pax Romana*:

> There is something more important than political liberty; and political rights are a means, not an end in themselves. That end is security of life and property: it could not be guaranteed by the constitution of Republican Rome. Worn and broken by civil war and disorder, the Roman People was ready to surrender the ruinous privilege of freedom and submit to strict government.

At the time, the only immediate reaction that I could muster after reading *The Roman Revolution* was to compose a poem, called, I thought fittingly, *Roman Revolution*:

> So: can only great (who have the Gaul) men

ever ring Rome's doorbells down? whose iron fists
are flowered full of games and copper candies?
Well: if greatness grows on par with gifts, Sir,
greater yet are they, who sharpen their plows
and beat the blade that feeds your Roman swords;
whose simple toothless women, making wares
withal to eat, set tables spread more modestly
than noble matrons' legs, and love the stuff
they faithful and forever fire hard.

No greater are the Greats at Rome—not Clodia,
nor Catullus, busy 'bout their leisure,
nor Cicero, nor Magnus—than a fitful
epileptic twitch or, Gaius Julius, seizure.

The puns, I realized even then, are unforgivable. (The bathos, however, was intentionally defamatory.) So perhaps is the following metaphrase of this sonnet, which I offer up nonetheless to help contextualize the title and introduce the topic of this chapter. One might invoke the example of Dante, who performed the same trick on his own youthful poems in *La Vita Nuova*, but that would be suppositious, and perilous.

Julius Caesar illegally extends the tenure of his generalship, his imperium, in Gaul; he crosses the Rubicon and takes Rome by force. In doing this, he follows in the footsteps of the likes of generals before him, Marius and Sulla, a generation earlier. Triumphs are celebrated and benefits distributed to appease the affront to the Constitution, placate Caesar's enemies, and ingratiate himself to citizen bystanders (lines 1-3). Where are the People in all of this? [The use of "Sir" as addressee refers of course in the first instance to Syme, but it was inspired also by Gerard Manley Hopkins' jeremiad that begins *Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend / With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just. / Why do sinners' ways prosper?*] As in a Brueghel painting, there always must be commoners in the background: farmers and their wives (toothless primarily in the sense of "harmless," "without guile," not old hags) who grow food, make pots and jars (*fictilia* in Latin, from *fingo, fingere*, "to form, or fashion with the fingers," with unsubtle, secondary conjugal reference) and work hard to put a simple meal on the table (lines 4-10).

On the other side of this unequal yoke we have "Greats" (lines 11-14), which are what the classical authors are called in the curriculum at Syme's Oxford. It is commonplace to observe that our literary sources for this period of Roman history—the momentous shift from Republic to Empire—are the work of elites. *The Roman Revolution* excelled in using the prosopography of elites—i.e., the systemized study of who's who and who was connected to whom in ancient Rome—to make its case. I tried to offer a cozy glimpse of this in the picture of the young poet Catullus (Gaius Valerius Catullus) and his lover "Lesbia" (= Clodia, wife of Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer; daughter of the old patrician Appius Claudius Pulcher), who in Catullus Poem 51 are presented as having too much time on their hands (*otium*) while great nations around them perish; Cicero, a so-called "new man" (*homo novus*), came late to the party, the first of his *gens* to become consul and thus join the Senatorial ranks in 63 BCE; Gnaeus Pompeius, who illegally celebrated a triumph and took on the surname "the Great" (Magnus) even before he was

elected consul with imperium, was himself the son of a new man, the cruel and cross-eyed Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo (cos. 89 BCE). There are various paths, it would seem, to "greatness."

Ordinary life, however, goes on, or tries to, and all of these events and persons, momentous in their time, amount to little more than a convulsion in history. This I tried to convey in the last line by the curious biographical detail that Caesar may have been an epileptic. The conceit, I had hoped, would be unmistakable: Here is a Roman revolution of another sort altogether, I thought, that puts the dichotomies of power, class, and privilege in perspective—a Great One groveling involuntarily on the ground by an act of Nature.

Res Rustica

In 2015, member countries of the United Nations adopted a set of 17 goals for sustainable development (SDGs) "to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all." It is an admirable document—a white paper from our world's ruling elite that affirms the close relationship of systems to sustainability that we have been investigating from various angles for antiquity. "The goals are interconnected," the official statement reads. "Often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another." Each goal articulates specific targets to be realized by A.D. 2030. But the ideas that many of these goals enshrine are much older and can be observed playing themselves out on the Italian peninsula beginning, arguably, as early as 753 B.C., the traditional date for the founding of Rome. They include, for example, "Life on Land" (No. 15), "Responsible Consumption and Production" (No. 12), and "Sustainable Cities and Communities" (No. 11); and they advocate for some of the following positions:

> Well-managed protected areas support healthy ecosystems, which in turn keep people healthy.
>
> Sustainable consumption and production aims at "doing more and better with less," increasing net welfare gains from economic activities . . . while increasing quality of life.
>
> Cities are hubs for ideas, commerce, culture, science, productivity, social development . . . At their best, cities have enabled people to advance socially and economically. However, many challenges exist to maintaining cities in a way that continues to create . . . prosperity while not straining land and resources.

The Romans, like us, were in one way or another concerned with all of these things. To be sure, they did not face all the same challenges we face (e.g., no carbon emissions), and certainly did not have all the same resources at their disposal to address them. Nor, even on their own terms, did they necessarily succeed. Ultimately, in fact, one

might say they failed, as a civilization. But they did cultivate values—in particular an agrarian ideal and a sensitivity to working landscapes—that confound categories of class and privilege and have something to offer to our current situation.

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The ascent of Rome and the development of Roman self-understanding is essentially a story of various populations and territories becoming subsumed by a metropolis by conquest and/or assimilation. This historical process of consolidation began in Italy, where small agricultural communities—hamlets, really, and what we would regard as small towns, often nestled around cult centers and numinous natural sites—**WHAT**. The land of the Tiber and Farfa river valleys in the territories of Latium and Sabina was especially important due to its proximity to public roads and access to Rome via the Tiber for transporting goods and produce.

In the *Aeneid*, Vergil glorifies this fertile region by mythologizing its historical ties to Rome. "Behold Clausus—" he sings, as he catalogues the indigenous forces arrayed against the Trojan invaders, "of ancient Sabine blood, leading a mighty host; equal, in fact, to a mighty host himself. From this man, now, throughout Latium, the tribe and clan of the Claudii spreads far and wide, once Rome—at a later time—will have been granted to the Sabines as its share" (*Aeneid* 7.706-715).

Vergil's audience would have known that Clausus was the eponymous ancestor of many of Rome's most prominent statesmen and, later, some of its early emperors. They would also have known the related aetiological story of the same historical process of assimilation of Romans with Sabines—the so-called Rape of the Sabine Women, recounted by Livy (*Ab urbe condita* 1.9)—which brought conflict initially, but ultimately resulted in Romulus forming a peace pact with the Sabines. Vergil alludes to that story here as well. Joining Clausus in the *Aeneid*'s epic battle for Latium are the Quirites (line 710), inhabitants of the ancient town of Cures (on the outskirts of modern Fara in Sabina), "who drink the Tiber and the Farfa" (line 715). The historical picture we are meant to envision in this roll call, refracted through poetry and myth (and all of it in self-conscious imitation of Homer), is of Sabine towns gradually and by various means being absorbed into Rome's orbit. That this relationship between territories and peoples was deeply felt, ultimately positive, and reciprocal may be seen from the fact that the historical Romans adopted in their turn the Sabine toponym *Quirites* as the standard designation for *all* citizens of Rome. Vergil's audience, of course, would have known that, too.

The *Aeneid*, composed by Vergil under Augustus, almost immediately became Rome's national epic. A rather different Augustan writer, the agronomist and polymath Varro,

calls this part of Sabine country—in particular his hometown of Reate—the "navel of Italy" (*umbilicus Italiae*) and Sabine Rosea its "udder" (*sumen*). Such affectionate evocations of land and landscape are typical of Roman literature, of all genres, in all periods. Horace, who, like Varro, owned a villa in Sabina, seems genuine is his frequent praise of rural life, even if, as a natural-born satirist, he cannot help but pull back sometimes or toss in a dash of irony. "Blessed is the man who, far from business dealings, works the family farm with his oxen, free from every kind of debt, like that race of men of old," he declares at the beginning of *Epode* 2. It is only when we reach the end of this long, convincing beatitude to country living that we realize it is but a day-dreamt monologue spoken by one Alfius—a *money-lender* (line 67): When the chips are down this would-be farmer (*iam iam futurus rusticus*), who knows all the tropes and talk, resorts to the business of usury as usual (lines 69-70). For the joke to work, the case of Alfius must have been typical.

Whatever an author's tone, it is important to emphasize that the Romans' admiration and praise for country life is almost always connected, not to the uncharted wilds, but to cultivated, manufactured landscapes. This is perhaps unavoidable in any area so densely settled and intensively farmed as Italy. (Consider for sake of comparison the English Lake District.) And altars, shrines, and sacred precincts would have been a stone's throw away in any direction. But is it also an affirmation of values. Again Vergil, in two passages referred to as the *Laus Italiae* and the *Laus Ruris* ("Praise of Italy," and "Praise of the Country Life"), from his agricultural poem the *Georgics*, brings this point to the fore.

The conditions for growing crops in Italy, Vergil boasts, are incomparably superb, better than in India, Persia, Bactria, or Asia Minor (*Georgics* 2.136-140). Spring, for example, seems to last forever, and summer stretches into months not its own. Cows calve twice a year, and twice the trees yield fruit (149-150). But embedded in this paean to the productive landscape are also "lofty cities, monuments to human toil" (*egregias urbes operumque laborem*), and "towns built by hand on steep crags, with rivers flowing beneath their ancient walls" (*congesta manu praeruptis oppida saxis / fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros*), an oblique reference perhaps to aqueducts (155-157). Artificial harbors and sea walls, too, are singled out for praise (158-164), even quarries and mines (165-166). People, of course, are also integral to this landscape: Sabines, Marsians, Ligurians, Volscians (167-172), and their noble descendants—"*te, maxime, Caesar*," the poet adds, referring to Augustus himself (169-170). "Hail, land of Saturn," Vergil concludes his Italian praise (173-174), highlighting the symbiotic relationship of Man with Nature, "mighty mother of crops, mighty mother of men!" (*salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus, / magna virum*).

The *Laus Ruris* (*Georgics* 2.458-540) is equally profuse with its praise, but its target is more focused and specific. One could just as aptly call it the *Laus Agricolarum*, or "In Praise of Farmers."

> *O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,*
> *agricolas! quibus ipsa, procul discordibus armis,*
> *fundit humo facilem victum iustissima Tellus.*
>
> Farmers! Blessed beyond all bounds! If only they knew
> their good fortune! For them, far from the clash of arms,
> most righteous Earth Herself gushes from the ground a ready source for life.
> (2.458-460)

Vergil enumerates the many blessings farmers enjoy. They can, for example, take particular advantage of the beauty of the natural landscape that surrounds them (467-471). Country living also makes them tough, frugal, and respectful of proper boundaries, both social and religious (472-473). In fact, Vergil implies, alluding to Hesiod's Myth of the Ages, the "most righteous Earth" (*iustissima Tellus*) provides them with such ready access to the means for living (*victum*) precisely because it is amongst farmers that Justice (*Iustitia*) left the last vestiges of her presence before she fled the Earth (474). Indeed, Vergil says even more directly later in this passage (538), the farmer's life was exactly how Saturn himself lived in the Golden Age (*aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat*). "This is the kind of life the old Sabines used to live," he likewise concludes, analogizing human and divine. "So, too, Remus and his brother" (532-533). While other citizens (like Vergil and those of his social ilk) are busily engaged in "the Forum's madness" (502), the farmer, who has zero interest in politics or public honors (495-498), has all the while been steadfastly ploughing his field (513). In a remarkable statement about the civic centrality of the quietist farmer, Vergil declares (514-515): "And in this way, he sustains his *patriam*, as well as his progeny" (*hinc patriam parvosque nepotes / sustinet*). One is reminded of the popular bumper sticker "No Farms, No Food," to say nothing of the UN's SDGs about "Life on Land," or "Sustainable Cities and Communities."

Much of Vergil's portrait of farm life is of course idealized. One could readily counter it with Horace's ironic epode about Alfius. The first poem of *Odes* Book 3 (lines 25-32) also tells somewhat against. There Horace decries the *fundus mendax*, "the lying farm"—lying, that is, as in unreliable or apt to cheat. Horace here is warning about the risks of relying on cash-crops: Fruit trees, he rightly notes, can be "faulty" (*culpans*), and winter "unfair" (*iniquus*). Uncontrollable

climatic and pestilential conditions, in other words, can seriously affect one's yield, and thus one's livelihood. (Horace's larger aim in this poem, however, is rather more philosophical, to make the point that we should, therefore, given the vagaries of environmental conditions of all sorts, live in the moment and be content with enough.) But these objections do not mean that Romans' admiration and fulsome praise for farming is just a poetic fantasy, or that the sentiments are not also genuine and meant to be taken seriously. What Adam Parry called "The Two Voices of Vergil's *Aeneid*" applies equally to the *Georgics*, as well: There is a plangent voice of pathos, caution, and regret underlying—*sotto voce*, as it were—one of optimistic hope; a voice of escapism, and one of sober, dutiful engagement.

What the *Georgics* does reflect clearly, however (indeed, as does Horace's poem about Alfius the banker), is the existence of an audience that was interested in such themes. This in turn reflects an historical development, for Roman elites had been amassing land and building working farms and estates throughout the Italian countryside for at least two generations before Vergil, a process that began with the spoils and economic opportunities afforded by Roman victories in the Punic Wars and in Greece, and became the pattern of national, then imperial growth for centuries after. That said, no new landowner is going to learn how to farm from reading Vergil. His poem is not a how-to manual, for all its pretentions to detail. Rather, as Philip Thibodeau argues, the *Georgics* is a work of consolation: "The downfall of the Republic . . . had the effect of bringing many of Vergil's first readers into closer contact with their country estates," he observes, by forced or voluntary retirement from the volatile, caustic political environment at Rome. What Vergil ultimately succeeds in doing, in Thibodeau's view, is to transfer "the supreme goods of the Roman aristocracy—honor, glory, dignity . . . to a rustic setting." There is an allegory of this perhaps in the report from one of Vergil's ancient biographers that the poet first published the *Georgics* by reading it aloud to Augustus as he made his way back to Rome, victorious over Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. The typical Vergilian pathos at *Georgics* 1.506-508 speaks perhaps to the situation many Romans found themselves in and from which, with the end of the Civil War after Augustus's victory, they hoped to be delivered:

> *. . . non ullus aratro*
> *dignus honos, squalent abductis arva colonis,*
> *et curvae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem*

. . . The plow does not get

> the honor it's due; fields languish as those who farm them are taken away, and their curved sickles are forged into an unbending sword.

If Romans sought to extricate themselves from knots of political intrigue and violent conflict, whither did they flee?

Elite Romans traditionally built two types of estate. *Villae urbanae* were residences located close to the city, sometimes even within its walls. A similar sort of domicile was the *villa maritima*, essentially a second home on the coast close to Rome. (Baiae and Cumae were favorite spots.) These were luxury mansions and served no agricultural purpose, even if they had extensive landscaping, fountains, and gardens. They could, like the infamous villas of Lucullus, also house libraries and museums of fine art. The other kind of estate was the *villa rustica*, or country villa. *Villae rusticae* were productive farms ("farm" is *fundus* in Latin) and usually had on site the permanent infrastructure and equipment needed for processing and storing cereals, olives and olive oil, wine, and fruit. Animals were pastured, too, on the less arable land. The living quarters on a *villa rustica* were often quite lavish, to be sure, for the landlord at least, but they were never a primary residence, rather a retreat. The farms themselves were run for the most part by a bailiff, or *vilicus*. The landowner's role was supervisory; he "farmed" *in absentia*, though the agricultural manuals of Cato, Varro, and Columella, and the ample advice given by the Elder Pliny indicate that owners took a keen personal interest in (and often had considerable first-hand knowledge of) animal husbandry, planting and propagation techniques, and capital improvements. To own land for the Romans was to farm. *Nihil est agri cultura melius, nihil uberius, nihil dulcius, nihil homine libero dignius* was Cicero's unequivocal estimation of farming: "Nothing is better than agriculture, nothing richer, nothing sweeter, nothing more fitting for a free man," and he owned at least eight estates. In saying so he was echoing a universal Roman ideal.

Back to the Land

The goal in Roman farming was self-sufficiency, as well as profit. Goods produced on one's own estate, for example, were not subject to Roman sumptuary laws. This, as Marzano observes, not only affirmed the ideal of self-sufficiency and of a localized economy, but also incentivized it. But land tenure and land reform was always front and center in Roman political life, and key to Roman self-identity, and not just for elites. In the beginning, when the Tarquin Kings were ousted, land was redistributed to the People. Each citizen, we are told, received a plot of seven *iugera*—so-called because one *iugerum* was the area one yoked team of oxen (*iugum*) could plow in one day;

seven, because that was deemed enough land to thrive on. The Elder Pliny relates a remark he describes as "well-known," attributed to Manius Curius Dentatus, the respected and influential Roman consul-general who put down a Sabine and Samnite uprising in 290 BCE: "A man not satisfied with seven *iugera* is a dangerous citizen (*perniciosum civem*)." Only those who aspired to be kings, the implication is, would think they needed more. "Seven *iugera*," in fact, became such a by-word of an idealized, Republican past that it made its way into political idiom. Varro extols Gaius Licinius Stolo, ancestor of one of his interlocutors in his dialogic treatise on agriculture, *Res Rustica*. As tribune of the plebs, Licinius was the first to lead the People from the Comitium (the legislative assembly-house) into "the seven *iugera* of the Forum" (*septem iugera forensia*) in order to ratify the laws. The Latin phrase is a figurative way of saying Licinius brought political deliberation home to where the People lived—on the farm. Insofar as one *iugerum* is equal to roughly two-thirds of a modern acre, the phrase and its political connotations is vaguely reminiscent of the titles of many American back-to-the-land manuals from days gone by: M. G. Kains's *Five Acres and Independence* (1935), for example, or the classic *Three Acres and Liberty* (1907) by Bolton Hall. (More on this phenomenon shortly.)

Indeed, the Romans recalled their legendary agrarian past and its link to political freedom with particular zeal, and they did so frequently since land questions were constantly on the Roman docket. For example, the same Licinius passed legislation in 367 BCE to limit land-holding by individual citizens to 500 *iugera*. Famously, the brothers Gracchi championed **WHAT**. **Lex Sempronia.** Allocations of agricultural land also served as the typical severance pay to Roman veterans, whose commanders—Roman consuls, hence politicians—were eager to retain their legions' loyalty, votes, and future service. Land owned by proscribed citizens (i.e., citizens declared public enemies for one reason or another) was confiscated, which afforded new opportunities to amass and/or redistribute property. Varro himself was involved with land subdivisions as a member of the *vigintiviri agris dividendis*, a Board of Twenty charged with dividing up the region of Campania for Pompey's veterans **IN WHAT YEAR**.

In fact, concern for proper use of land and allocation of resources colors virtually every piece of advice in *Res Rustica*. Varro praises Gnaeus Tremelius Scrofa, for example, his colleague on the Board of Twenty and "esteemed as the Roman most skilled in agriculture," for his estates' productivity and Scrofa's embrace of best practices. "When people come to inspect his farmsteads," Varro notes with approval, "it is not to see collections of paintings, as at Lucullus's villas, but collections of fruit." Elsewhere we learn (*Res Rustica* 1.13.6-7) "A farm is without question more profitable, so far as the buildings are concerned, if you build more in keeping with the thrift of the ancients than with the luxury of people today.

> The ancients built to suit the size of their crops; the moderns build to suit their unbridled desires. Thus the ancients' rustic villas cost more than their urban ones, while now the opposite is usually the case. In those days, a villa was praised if it had a good country kitchen, roomy animal pens, and facilities for wine and oil production in proportion to the size of the farm . . . They likewise took care back then that the villa should have everything else required for agriculture. In these times, by contrast, people strive to have as large and elegant an urban villa as possible—they seek to vie with the "villas" of Metellus and Lucullus, which were built at great harm to the State.

There is a telling metaphor—for Varro not a dead one—in the Latin word translated above as "profitable"—*fructuosus*—which means literally "fruitful." The Elder Pliny (*Natural History* 18.3) took similar delight in etymologizing Rome's agrarian roots, noting how the Latin word for "money" (*pecunia*) derives from the word for "livestock" (*pecus*), and the word for "wealthy" (*locuples*) from the phrase "'full of place,' that is, land" (*loci, hoc est agri, plenos*). As for Varro's praise for proper proportion of expenditure and propriety of infrastructure to agricultural purpose and use (*ad fructum rationem*), many a Vermont dairy farmer will tell you today that what distinguishes real farms from hobby ventures is that the barns and milking parlor on a real farm are always in better condition than the house. But Varro goes beyond simply offering normative, folksy advice when he indicts the McMansions of Lucullus and Metellus as positively "harmful to the State" (*pessimo publico*). In what way harmful, we might ask? Marzano suggests Varro means that the money the wealthy used to build such "villas" would have been better spent on public infrastructure projects—*magnificentia* ("munificence")—as opposed to the craven *luxuria* of private indulgence. Wiseman thinks it has to do with the consolidation of land into too few hands. Both may be right. The Elder Pliny, in his own *Laus Ruris* that is *Natural History* Book 18, offers some insight on the issue, but his comments also raise fascinating additional questions. "The ancients thought that to observe moderation in the size of a farm was of primary importance," he writes (18.7),

> inasmuch as they determined that it was more satisfactory to sow less land and plough it better, an opinion I note Vergil held as well [= *Georgics* 2.412: *laudato ingentia rura / exiguum colito*]. Indeed, to tell the truth, large estates have ruined Italy, and are now ruining the provinces, too: Half of Africa was owned by six landlords when the Emperor Nero put them to death. Thus, let us not defraud Pompey of this additional mark of his Greatness, namely that he at least never bought land belonging to a contiguous estate.

Pliny, writing in the age of Vespasian (69-79 CE), prefers the days when Roman generals ploughed their own fields. "The fields were tilled in earlier times," Pliny reminisces, "by the hands of generals themselves, and we may well believe that the Earth rejoiced in a laurel-decked ploughshare and a ploughman who had celebrated a triumph" (18.4). K. D. White, in a careful study of the evidence for the kind of large estates Pliny refers to here—*latifundia* in Latin—**WHAT**. But what did Pliny mean exactly by *latifundia perdidere Italiam*? "Where the problems are so complex, and the gaps in the record so wide, Pliny's statement is so vague as to be virtually without value," is White's conclusion, though he leans toward the view of Heisterbergk that depopulation of the countryside was to blame: *Latifundia* had grown to be so large and the rural population so depleted, the argument goes, that they couldn't be adequately cultivated. But Pliny himself, immediately following his remarks about the good old days of soldier-citizen-farmers working small plots, offers an observation about labor on farms in his day that sheds additional light:

> Nowadays agricultural operations are performed by slaves with fettered ankles and by the hands of malefactors with branded faces! although the Earth who is addressed as our mother and whose cultivation is spoken of as worship is not so dull that when we obtain even our farm-work from these persons one can believe that this is not done against her will and to her indignation. And we forsooth are surprised that we do not get the same profits from the labor of slave-gangs as used to be obtained from that of generals! **REWORK**

In characterizing slave labor on farms as an affront to Mother Earth (*Tellus*) "whose cultivation is spoken of as worship" Pliny plays on two senses of the verb *colere*, which means both "to cultivate" and "to worship." Earth does not produce bountiful yields from exploitation, Pliny suggests, just as forced labor cannot properly cultivate the deity of Nature. Both are unwilling participants in the kinds of transactional exchange discussed in Chapter 1. Pliny's objection to *latifundia* here is thus both an economic and a moral one. Varro, too, with a bit more literary finesse, similarly indicts the social and political climate of the Late Republic as a sacrilegious violation of Mother Earth. He sets Book 1 of *Res Rustica* in Tellus's temple. His interlocutors—all of them actual statesman-soldier-farmers of the type Pliny envisions, each with names and pedigrees closely tied to their agricultural *milieu*: Fundanius (Mr. Farmer), Agrius (Mr. Field), Scrofa ("Porker"), Stolo ("Offshoot")—gaze admiringly at a map of Italy painted on the wall as they discuss the finer points of farm management. Their leisurely conversation, however, is interrupted abruptly at book's end when the freedman of the temple's caretaker, the sacristan Fundilius (another "Farmer"), with whom Varro and his colleagues were supposed to have dinner later that evening, barges in with news that Fundilius has been inexplicably stabbed in the street and killed. "By punctuating the discussion of agricultural matters

with an incident of urban violence," Peralta observes of this passage, "the book's ending . . . functions to reposition the treatise as a bridge between *rus* and *urbs*." "By setting the death of the temple custodian as the *sphragis* to Book 1," he adds,

> Varro gestures not only to the deaths of the many who perished in the convulsions of the late Republic but to the fates of the specific few who had promoted themselves as caretakers of the idea of Italy. Read in this light, Book 1's conclusion effectively does double duty as a warning: if the custodian of the idea of Italy was not safe, what fate awaited the idea?

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Five Acres and Independence is a book that I actually own, in the "Revised and Enlarged Edition" of 1940. Its author, M. G. Kains, "Special Crop Culturist, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Former Head of Horticulture Department, Pennsylvania State College; Lecturer on Horticulture, Columbia University," etc. offers specific, detailed advice, not only on crops, tree grafting, apiculture, poultry care and whatnot, but also on, e.g., the construction of French drains, precautions against a wet cellar, and "conditions to be avoided" with septic systems. Kains's treatise takes more than a page from the playbooks of Cato and Columella.

Dona Brown has ably surveyed American homesteading movements over the years, up to and including the present day. In *Back to the Land: The Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), Brown writes engagingly about the various impulses that have propelled folks to choose to live close to the land, highlighting the economic and social conditions that made such a move both desirable and possible. These range from government-sponsored agrarian revival and resettlement programs, to off-the-grid, anti-establishment ideologies, to the even more basic, primal urge simply to return to a simpler way of life. Perhaps not surprisingly, as Brown shows in almost every instance, back-to-the-land movements are primarily an urban phenomenon: Disaffected cubicle workers, entrepreneurial immigrants, or bored urban elites buy a book like Kains's and look to agriculture and self-sufficient homesteading for emancipation, opportunity, and escape. Young Americans are still heading back to the land in a steady stream, trading desk jobs for farming, as a recent *Washington Post* story relates with apparent approbation. In ancient Rome, during the lifetime of Pliny the Elder, the emperor Nero is reported to have burned down an entire neighborhood in the city center to make room for his infamous Domus Aurea, or Golden House, whose many rooms he proceeded to adorn with painted frescoes of rustic vignettes—a lifestyle chic the poet Martial later pilloried as an attempt to artificially recreate *rus in urbe* ("a bit of country in the city"). One can

glimpse the aesthetics of it for oneself in Raphael's painted loggias in the Vatican, which were directly inspired by the accidental rediscovery of the Domus Aurea in the Renaissance. Nero's appropriation of land in the civic center was not in spirit unlike the forced confiscations that sometimes took place, by proscription, in the countryside. Both phenomena, as well as the even more pervasive agrarian ideal of the late Republic and early Empire that we see celebrated by Vergil, Varro, Pliny, and others, spring from the same source and point to this at least partial conclusion: Romans in an age of satiety and excess were the first back-to-the-landers and trust-fund farmers—affluent urbanists yearning, like us, for a simpler, more "sustainable" life.

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In *Back to the Garden: Nature and the Mediterranean World from Prehistory to the Present* (Yale University Press, 2015), a book that—incredibly—makes not even a passing reference to Joni Mitchell, or Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, despite its title, James McGregor argues that today's ecological crisis "is not an extension but a contravention of the norms of the historical past." McGregor finds in the early settlements and great civilizations of the Mediterranean basin what he calls a philosophy and practice of "First Nature"—"a once-powerful consensus on the constructive management of the earth, a consensus that developed along with agriculture." "All ancient culture," he writes at one point, effectively summarizing the argument of the whole book, "was agri-culture."

The thesis is attractive; the attempt to demonstrate it admirable and ambitious. A more nuanced and rigorously historical approach to the same topic is Horden & Purcell's monumental *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Blackwell, 2000), not cited by McGregor, which surveys with astonishing depth, breadth, and detail the microecologies of Mediterranean lands (which were roughly coterminous with the borders of the Roman Empire at its height). Horden & Purcell provide what can only be described as an ethnography of a whole, definable region that covers a period of time over three-plus millennia. What these two books share, however, even if they are not composed on the same level, is a keen interest in continuities over time, and in contiguities involving place. A more familiar way to characterize this general approach to the study of the past is to speak of synchronic and diachronic descriptions. But to write an environmental or ecological history of any sort or substance the physical characteristics of place—both topography and, say, *terroir*—are essential, and something that the word *contiguity* captures better than "synchronic."

For the historian or archaeologist of microecologies, an ideal case study in contiguity and continuity would consist of an unspoiled, ancient working landscape that is still in

active use for agriculture today; one that can provide a unique opportunity to study simultaneously the history of the built environment and the conditions for conservation and sustainable use in the present; one that instantiates the kinds of relationships that obtain between the countryside and cities, and, in our day and age, between tourists and landscapes. These, as it happens, are critical interfaces for sustainable development according to the UN's SDGs, especially where it involves the production, distribution, and consumption of food. Where could one find such a place?

Fundus Pompeianus

In May 2016, I was the fortunate beneficiary of a short residency at the American Academy in Rome. I was working on the libretto for an opera about the emperor Nero and wrote Chapter 4 of this book. The Academy sits directly across the street from the Villa Aurelia, a classic *villa urbana* of the ancient sort (if not design), originally built for Cardinal Girolamo Farnese in 1650. The Academy's lush grounds and setting, on the Janiculum Hill overlooking the bustling neighborhood of Trastevere and the Rome skyline, are stunning. The food is outstanding, too. Over the previous decade the AAR had revamped its food service for Fellows and their guests. The Rome Sustainable Food Project, started in 2007, is a farm-to-table operation inspired by the Slow Food movement. Celebrity chef Alice Waters provided initial guidance and menus, and a prestigious internship program staffs the kitchen with rising chefs. Fresh ingredients are sourced from nearby organic farms and from the Academy's kitchen garden. Of all this, too, I was a beneficiary.

At the end of our stay my wife and I took a walking trip through the Sabine Hills. We started in the quaint, walled acropolis town of Casperia, walked to an agriturismo called "Horace's Barn" (Il Fienile d'Orazio) in Monte San Giovanni, and completed our three-day trek at Agriturismo Le Mole sul Farfa in Mompeo, about 40 miles from the Rome. The proprietor of Le Mole, I had heard from a Vermont colleague who had stayed there the year prior, had discovered ample, well-preserved remains of a *villa rustica* in his organic olive grove. Some of his trees, she told me, had been carbon-dated to over 1,000 years old and produced unknown, i.e., pre-modern, varieties of olives. (See photo.)

The owner-cum-farmer, Stefano Fassone, 47, is an urban refugee from Rome. He had dropped out of law school, worked for a while in a mountain gear shop, started forestry school, and dropped out of that, too. He is a self-described sustainability and whole foods nut and a skilled, self-taught cartographer. (It was he who mapped out and marked the hiking trails between agriturismi, in conjunction with the Italian Alpine Club.) Fassone partnered with two investors to purchase the property near the Farfa river, where the main house stands, and later the olive grove, about a mile away, in 2005. The grove had been owned by two illiterate shepherds—bachelor brothers—one of whose name was simply Uomo, "Man." He signed his name on the deed with an "X".

Elisabeth De Coster, an art history student from Belgium, first came to Fassone's farm on an international internship program, sowing some wild oats between future prospects in Belgium. But, as Vergil instructs (*Eclogues* 10.69), love conquers all: A short two months into her stay, she found herself moved out from the shelter where the other WWOOF volunteers lived and into the old shepherd's hut that Fassone was refurbishing. The two got married, and now have two small children. De Coster cooks delicious locally-sourced vegetarian fare and manages the tourism side of this farm-hotel. The rooms and furnishings at Le Mole are top-notch, the hospitality superb, but this farm operation is definitely a hands-on, hard-scrabble work of sweat-equity, not a tax write-off for the idle rich.

Le Mole means “The Mill” and refers on the one hand to the medieval mill-house once powered by the Farfa, the ruins of which lie a short walk below the guesthouse in the valley. But the name also evokes the ancient Roman millstone (*mola*) Fassone found in the olive grove—still suspended in limbo, only partially exposed. (See photo.)

A Roman-era water cistern that had been used as a sheep shelter was cleared of five feet of manure, as was a cave-like opening that was later revealed to be a sprawling *cryptoporticus*, or underground processing and storage facility for olive oil, with a three-bay oil-separating vat, perfectly preserved *in situ*. The pipe that connects the bays is made of lead, which guarantees ancient, not medieval construction. Incredibly, when I first visited the villa, you could even see the remains of a white mosaic floor, probably from the pressing room (*torcularium*) above the *cryptoporticus*, peeping through the field-grass. (See photos.)

Mola. Le Mole. Here is a Roman revolution of yet another sort—one that has come full circle: an unspoiled productive landscape rediscovered by a back-to-the-land urbanite on which the turnings of the seasons and churnings of oil production have been going on for more than 2,000 years. As for continuity and contiguity, Le Mole exemplifies both. This ancient grove of olive trees is rare in that it sits cheek-by-jowl with the

infrastructure and apparatus of a *villa rustica* purpose-built to process its crop on site. Fassone and De Coster continue the same or similar venture undertaken by their ancient Roman forebears into the present: Their agriturismo is a working farm, but also a peaceful, pleasant retreat for travelers and guests; it produces artisanal oil for the retail market, and self-consciously preserves and enhances the landscape, just like the *villae rusticae* of old. In fact, Fassone likes to refer to himself not as an agriculturalist or olive grower, but as a landscape farmer. The institution of slavery now thankfully dismantled, WWOOF volunteers now provide indentured labor. The press at the nearby oil cooperative is thoroughly modern and state-of-the-art, but the olives themselves are harvested in the ancient manner: Hand rakes strip the olives from the branches; the olives tumble into nets on the ground for collection; donkeys assume the roles of both mower and tractor between the trees and spread their own fertilizer. Even the origin of the modern agriturismo movement in Italy is reminiscent of ancient Roman land use and reform: In the 1980s, the Italian government began offering significant tax incentives to keep small farmers on their farms by allowing their properties to double as hospitality centers—so long as at least fifty percent of an agriturismo's income continues to derive from agriculture. Tiberius Gracchus or Gaius Licinius Stolo would have approved.

Whose villa was this? Based merely on the extent of the visible remains, it was clearly an important site. I returned to Le Mole in October 2017 to help with the olive harvest, and to sort through some documentary evidence about the property. Since my first visit, I learned that there had been a short, owner-financed two-week test excavation, in fall 2016, by Federico Giletti of the University of Rome ("La Sapienza"), in conjunction with the British School. A preliminary published report rehearses some of the documentary evidence about the site, but not all, and is (perhaps judiciously) mute on its most interesting initial implications. A final verdict about dating and possible attribution, of course, will have to wait for a full, scientific excavation and the stratigraphy it reveals. The physical evidence so far, however, suggests a date in the Republican period, first-century BCE, a result to be confirmed and published soon after cleaning and testing a copper coin discovered in the test dig. Whatever future excavations reveal about these promising remains located on a precious working landscape, Christopher Smith, the Director of the British School, strikes the right tone and approach going forward: "The welcome addition of new material from Mompeo in particular shows the potential of the area. If more research is to be done however, it must now more than ever be tied in to the economic well-being of the relevant area; heritage has to make a contribution to its own management." Farming, that is, must go on.

Meanwhile, the origin of the town name of Mompeo is a linguistic teaser. The *Regestum Farfense*, an early medieval catalogue of lands belonging to the nearby Farfa Abbey compiled by the energetic monk Gregory of Catino (1060-c.1130), describes the area surrounding and including Mompeo as *mons Pompeie*, "Mount Pompey." And the site on which Fassone's villa is located has long been, and is still, known to locals simply as "Monte." The reigning Marchese of the baronial Naro family, which controlled Mompeo and its environs from 1646 till 1816, boasted of the association of "Monte" with Pompey the Great in a properties list (*catasto*) dated 1779. In 1620, the farmer's church of San Carlo in Mompeo was restored by the town's earlier Marchesi, the Orsini, and adorned with an inscription, chiseled in large Roman capitals, honoring the piety and alms-giving of the "Sabine people of Pompeio" (POPVLI A POMPEIO SABINI). *Pompeio* for "Mompeo" makes the association of the place with Pompey's name explicit and might be explained by the fact that the *Regestum* and the related *Chronicon Farfense* sometimes refer to the area simply as *Pompeie*, or *Pompege*.

Benefactors and patrons, of course, like to brag, and can exaggerate legendary associations, but that *mons Pompeie* (or, in classical Latin, *mons Pompeianus*) is indeed the likely source for the name "Mompeo" is suggested by other similar derivations of Italian place names from Latin, for example Forlì, truncated from *Forum Livii*, or Bassano, from *fundus Bassianus*. In fact, *fundus Pompeianus* is an even more specific and typical designation for the area than *mons Pompeie*. *"Fundus Pompeianus"* appears in at least four documents in the *Regestum*. It is mentioned in conjunction with two contiguous properties: a *fundus Acutianus* (≈ Mount Acuziano), where the Abbey was originally built on the remains of a Roman villa, and a *fundus Calistrianus*—"where the church of St. Laurence is," according to the *Regestum*—which suggests Toffia and its ancient church of San Lorenzo, which is located on a hill known to locals as "Monte Cacortiano" (≈ *Calistrianus*?).

What makes evidence from the Farfa *Regestum* particularly important is that Gregory consciously incorporated all earlier documents from the monastery archives into his work. The earliest of the references to a *fundus Pompeianus*, for example, is dated 817, before the Abbey was overrun by the Saracens in 898 and briefly abandoned. Exactly when the *fundus Pompeianus* became the property of the Abbey is uncertain. The *Chronicon Farfense* dates the foundation of Farfa Abbey by another St. Laurence, a monk from Syria, to the time of the emperors Julian the Apostate (361-363) or Gratian (367-383), which would make Farfa one of the oldest monasteries in Europe. That is a legend, but the archaeological evidence lends support to the claim that there was some kind of monastic settlement at the site as early as the fourth century. The donation of the surrounding land would have come later, probably sometime after the first destruction of the original Abbey by the Lombards in the sixth century and its re-

foundation by Thomas of Maurienne (circa 680). Be all that, however, as it may, the designation *fundus Pompeianus* is certainly Classical, not Late Antique or Medieval. That the Pompey in question is Pompeius Magnus is also likely. At least three additional considerations support these inferences, which are worth rehearsing briefly here.

1) The *Tabula Alimentaria*. This huge bronze plaque, discovered in 1747, publicizes the terms of a one-million sesterces loan from the emperor Trajan in 103 CE to the people of Veleia in northern Italy to boost agricultural production and raise funds (on the interest) to support children in need. It itemizes for collateral on the loan dozens of *fundi* in a manner similar to the *Regestum Farfense*. In fact, the *Regestum*'s property lists originate from just this kind of Roman legal document. The formula *fundus* + owner's nomen + *-anus* suffix to describe farms, we see confirmed in Trajan's *Tabula*, was boilerplate (e.g., *fundus Metilianus, Velleianus, Helvianus*, etc.). That Pompey owned many *villae rusticae*, in addition to *villae urbanae et maritimae*, is shown by Pliny's remark, cited above: His rural holdings must have been numerous and dispersed enough for Pompey to have gained a reputation for not buying up contiguous properties and gathering them into *latifundia*. That he had the financial means there is no question: Greenhalgh provides good reasons to think that Pompey was several times wealthier than the proverbially rich Crassus.

2) Pompey was native to greater Sabina, and so would probably have been well-invested there. The gentilic *Pompeius* derives from the Oscan word for "five" (*pompo*—which explains why so many members of the family were called Quintus), to which the suffix –*eius* has been added. This is a typical way Sabine family names were Latinized. The linguistic connection of the Pompeii to Sabine territory is reflected also in the fact that Pompeius Strabo, Pompey's father, hailed from Picenum, the southern part of which shared Sabellic cultural and linguistic features with Sabina proper, where Pompey *fils* also owned estates and from where he raised his first legions. Pompey's popularity as a general and patron was such that he famously boasted he need just stamp his foot and armies would spring up from Italian soil (Plutarch, *Life of Pompey* §57)—an allusion, no doubt, to all the veterans he had resettled on farms. A hint of such gratitude might be evident in one landowner in Latium marking the installation of a new oil-settling vat on his property with an inscription dating it to Pompey's second consulship in 55 BCE.

3) All roads lead to Rome. The Sabina was connected to Rome by the Via Salaria, or "Salt Road," so called because Sabine tribes had from time immemorial used that ancient land artery to gather and transport salt from the mouth of the Tiber to the hinterland. The Via Salaria was one of historical Rome's major thoroughfares; it terminated on the Adriatic coast in Picenum and passed through Reate (Rieti), the heart—or umbilical—of Sabine country, Varro's hometown. Both the Via Salaria

and the Farfa river are prominently labeled on Peutinger's Map, a medieval copy on parchment of an ancient Roman original that scholars attribute ultimately to Marcus Agrippa (64-12 BCE), a confidant of Augustus. That a major branch off the Via Salaria passed right through Mompeo (though not drawn as such on Peutinger) is indicated on the one hand by the remains of massive Republican-era tomb monuments bestriding the modern road in Borgo di Sotto (in the municipality of Mompeo), and, on the other, by an imposing milestone, unearthed by a local farmer ploughing his field in 1956 but set up by Augustus himself in 13 or 14 BCE, now in the courtyard of Mompeo's Town Hall, which more or less accurately indicates the distance from Rome—35 miles. (See photo.) Access to and from the Roman villa on "Monte," then, would have been straightforward in antiquity, and traffic regular. The milestone suggests the location was also a prominent, important destination. Could it be that the new *Princeps* was staking out Imperial claims in the area on estates inherited from his adoptive father Caesar, which Caesar had in his turn confiscated from Pompey upon the defeat of Pompey loyalists at the Battle of Philippi (42 BCE)—land, notwithstanding, that retained in popular memory its association with the beloved Pompey, *fundus Pompeianus*?

All this evidence of course will only be circumstantial until someone finds "Pompey's Cup" in the ground at Mompeo, or an inscription. For the time being, however, the evidence for identifying Fassone's and De Coster's farm with Pompey is at least as strong as the identification of the villa excavated at Licenza as "Horace's." What is beyond dispute is that Le Mole is a unique and important site. So much is at stake in the venture—practically and symbolically. The UN's statement on sustainable agriculture (*à propos* SDG No. 2) in many ways sums up the interactions between continuity and contiguity, past and present, as we see it played out at Le Mole. When the UN "recognizes the interlinkages . . . supporting sustainable agriculture [and] empowering small farmers," for example, we think of Le Mole's status as a modern agriturismo. "Agriculture systems worldwide must become more productive and less wasteful," on the other hand, reads like a recommendation straight out of Varro and is the very sort of sustainability ethos at the heart of Le Mole. As for the connection between sustainability and a systems approach to the problems of living, the UN agrees with the premise of this book when it declares unambiguously that "sustainable agricultural practices and food systems, including both production and consumption, must be pursued from a holistic and integrated perspective." The call for "integrated decision-making . . . to achieve synergies and adequately address trade-offs" in promoting productive agriculture—agriculture, in other words, that is practiced in a way commensurate with the availability of natural resources (i.e., water, energy, land) and the limitations on those resources (e.g., climate change)—is an injunction in the same spirit. That some of the trees at Pompey's villa are producing pre-modern, hitherto unknown varieties of olives that may reflect an authentic taste of ancient Rome—well, Sabina DOP olive oil (*Denominazione di Origine Protetta*, "Protected Designation of Origin") has nothing on that. Indeed, Le Mole is at one and the same time a productive, working landscape and a monument to ancient agronomy. It is also a living seed bank where the biodiversity of the past is still on deposit and is being conscientiously managed for future generations.

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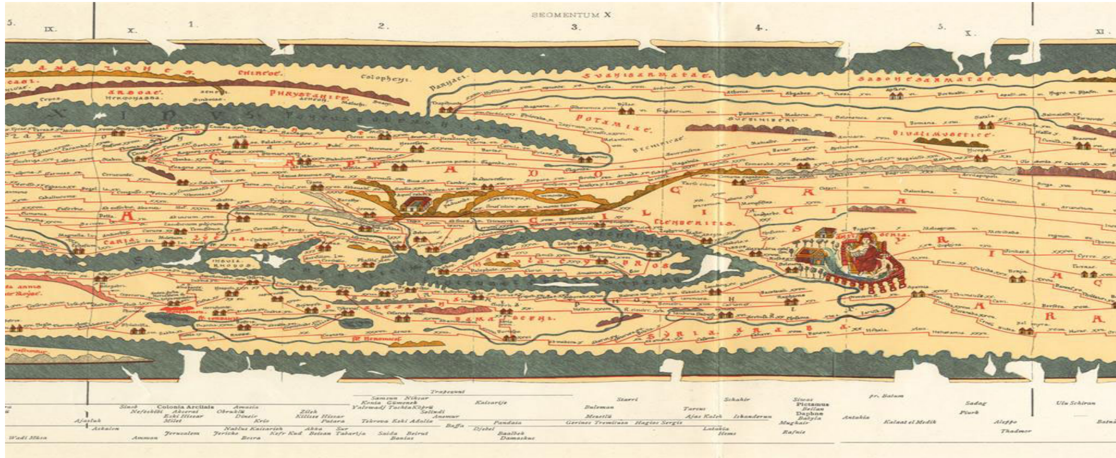
The relationship between cities and their environs, another lynchpin of sustainable development according to the UN, is unusually presented on Peutinger's Map, which is actually a scroll. The Map's narrow band-like register (one foot high) and considerable length (22 feet) presents a highly schematic depiction of space and of the relationships of parts to whole. It is "closer to a contemporary city's subway map than an accurate representation of scale and distances," as one commentator puts it. (See Figure 1.)



Mapmaking, too, has a curious, if incidental parallel at Le Mole, as Fassone has produced a map of his own. Far less idiosyncratic than Peutinger's, its purpose is primarily to connect walkers to destinations throughout the Sabine Hills. But it also, with its many marked by-ways and paths, including old Roman roads, inscribes topographical links between the present and the past. In recent years, historians of the ancient Roman economy have come to question the older "consumer city" model purveyed by, e.g., M. I. Finley. Neville Morley is a leading exponent of this newer school of thought. Morley's and others' work shows that the relationship of the Roman metropolis to the countryside was rather more complex, decentralized, and reciprocal than previously thought. Peutinger's Map provides a graphic illustration of this idea, which is seen, too, in the Map's reception: Owing to its cultural and topographical importance for ancient Italy, architect Rem Koolhaas chose to reproduce the Peutinger Map in 2014 as a giant, diaphanous curtain between installations at *Monditalia*, a multi-media exhibit celebrating Italy's place in the modern world (at the Venice Architectural Biennale). Amale Andraos, Dean of Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, used the occasion of a review of the Koolhaas exhibit to re-consider the Map itself. Her interpretation as a contemporary architect and urban planner is in concert with Morley's historian's view of the Roman agricultural economy as a dynamic, interactive network of people, places, and ideas. "Moving away from the center-periphery narrative," Andraos writes, the Peutinger Map "represents a world always already connected, where lines are not arrows, singularly pointing outward from Rome, but instead create a complex network of exchanges and flows." The Map, she continues,

> renders the field of generic icons/cities thick with meaning and information, as it represents infrastructure, the movement of travelers both human and animal, the exploitation of resources, the exchange of knowledge, and the deployment of

> power. It is a map that makes visible the complex and intertwined set of forces and relationships that shape the built environment.

Whose world does this vision describe? one might ask without any irony or disingenuousness. The Romans', or ours? The distinctions between the two are blurred because they are in fact blurry. At the very least, Andraos's characterization underscores the premise we have been attempting to substantiate in this chapter and throughout, namely that systems and sustainability are inextricably intertwined; in theory and in practice; in the past, as in the present.

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Whether the villa at Le Mole is Pompey's or not is in a sense immaterial. What is solid, as Syme concluded in *The Roman Revolution*, is that "the tone of literature in the Augustan age," by which he meant not only Vergil, Horace, and Livy, but also writers like Varro, "is certainly Pompeian, rather than Caesarian, just as its avowed ideals are Republican, not absolutist." "It was the fashion," Syme observes elsewhere, "to be Pompeian rather than Caesarian, for that was the 'better cause'." To this pronouncement Syme adds in a note that "the term 'Pompeianus' . . . need not denote an adherent of Pompeius. The Romans," he explains, "lacked a word for 'Republican'." The ancient Roman ideal of the smallholding citizen-farmer, I submit, is an important notional corollary to this general *Tendenz*.

The task of Republicanizing the new Empire, however, fell primarily not to the authors of the day, and certainly not to farmers, but to its autocrat, the *Princeps* Augustus. In a remarkable passage worthy of the historian Tacitus himself Syme offers the following reprise of his argument, in which he notably elides Augustus's name entirely even as he describes the Principate's after-effects:

> Seeking to establish continuity with a legitimate government, Caesar's heir forswore the memory of Caesar: in the official conception, the Dictatorship and the Triumvirate were blotted from the record. This meant a certain rehabilitation of the last generation of the Republic, which in politics is the Age of Pompeius. In his youth Caesar's heir, the revolutionary adventurer, won Pompeian support by guile and coolly betrayed his allies, overthrowing the Republic and proscribing the Republicans: in his mature years the statesman stole their heroes and their vocabulary.

Vergil somehow came to terms with the new settlement. His praise of Augustus for the *Princeps*'s restoration of his own farm in Mantua, confiscated after the Battle of Philippi,

is reflected indirectly in the gratitude expressed to an unnamed, but divine "youth" (*iuvenem*) by the old shepherd Tityrus, a bucolic character in *Eclogue* 1 (lines 40-45; 59-63). In the *Georgics* (2.490-494), Vergil implies that the farmer is, however, much more than just a passive beneficiary of imperial *fiat*: He is a philosopher, of the Presocratic stripe, a person "who has succeeded in learning the laws of Nature" (*qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*); a man who, like the Epicureans, has "trampled under his feet all fear and implacable Fate, / and the river-roar of insatiable Death" (*atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum / subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari*). The Roman farmer's philosophical engagement with the Cosmos, as Vergil portrays it, is, historically speaking, a poetic conceit. A voice from the Commons, however, comes nearer the truth. Consider these musings inscribed on stone by a real-life farmer-philosopher from Cisalpine Gaul. I think these remarks speak powerfully not only for themselves, but to us as well:

> Gaius Castricius Calvus, son of Titus, military tribune . . . a man of good will . . . a farmer; a patron to good ex-slaves, and especially to those who cultivate their fields well and energetically; who keep themselves physically in good condition, which is particularly important for farmers; who feed themselves, and who keep possession of whatever they have . . . Here are true maxims for the person who wants to live well and in freedom: The first thing is duty—you are to wish your master well, respect your parents, keep good faith; curse not, lest you hear bad things of yourself. The man who does no harm and is faithful will lead a pleasant and untroubled life in uprightness and happiness. These precepts which a farmer teaches you to remember he did not learn through the teaching of the learned, but of his own nature and experience.

Notes:

Mussolini's speech, delivered on January 22, 1939 ("Ai rurali d'Italia per la battaglia del grano"), may be heard in Italian on YouTube; English translation in WHERE. **Syme quotations**, in order: pp. 2, 9, and 513. **The UN's SDGs:** www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment. **Clausus and the Claudians:** Livy 2.16. **Navel of Italy:** Varro, as cited in Pliny, *Natural History* 3.109; **udder:** Varro, *Res Rustica* 1.7.10. ***Iustissima Tellus***: cf. Chapter 1, pp. WHAT. **Parry:** Adam Parry, "The Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*," *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 2.4 (1963), pp. 66-80. **Thibodeau**: Philip Thibodeau, *Playing the Farmer: Representations of Rural Life in Vergil's* Georgics, University of California Press, 2011, pp. 114 and 75. **Ancient biographer:** Aelius Donatus, *Vita Vergilis* §27. **Cicero on farming:** *de Officiis* 1.151; **Cicero's estates:** George L. Gorse, "Cicero's Portrait and the Roman Villa," in *Cicero Refused to Die: Ciceronian Influence through the Centuries*, edited by Nancy van Deusen, Brill, 2013, pp. 197-208. **Marzano on villas:** Annalisa Marzano, *Roman Villas in Central Italy: A Social and Economic History*, Brill, 2007, p. 83. ***Iugera* and Dentatus**: Pliny, *Natural History* 18.3. **Varro as *vigintivir***: Pliny, *Natural History* 7.176. **On *pessimo publico*:** Marzano, p. 17; T. P. Wiseman, *Remembering the Roman People*: *Essays on Late-Republican Politics and Literature*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 117. ***Latifundia*:** K. D. White,

"Latifundia," *Bulletin of the Institute for Classical Studies* 14 (1967), pp. 62-79; quotation from p. 78. **Murder at the Tellus temple:** See Dan-El Padilla Peralta, "Italy at Knife-Point: Reading Varro *De Re Rustica* 1.69.2–3," *Classical Philology* 112.4 (2017), pp. 482-485. ***Rus in urbe*:** Martial, *Epigrams* 12.57 (to Sparsus), line 21. ***Washington Post* story:** www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/a-growing-number-of-young-americans-are-leaving-desk-jobs-to-farm/2017/11/23/e3c018ae-c64e-11e7-afe9-4f60b5a6c4a0_story.html?tid=ss_mail&utm_term=.a2ae26bc5bac. **McGregor quotations:** pp. 8 and 89. **Test excavation:** Federico Giletti, "Alcune considerazioni sul territorio sabino in agro di Mompeo (RI), tra vecchie acquisizioni e nuovi scavi. La villa di località Monte," in *Cures tra archeologia e storia: Ricerche e considerazioni sulla capitale dei Sabini ed il suo territorio*, edited by Marco Cavalieri, with a preface by Christopher Smith, Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2017, pp. 153-172; Smith quotation on p. 2. ***Regestum* citations** from *Il Regesto di Farfa*, edited by Ugo Balzani & Ignazio Giorgi, 5 vols. Rome, 1879–1914, in order: Vol. II, docs. 224, 282, 300; Vol. III, docs. 322, 323, 339, 404, 322, 419, 597; Vol. IV; doc. 639; cf. also relevant material in the *Chronicon Farfense*, from *Il Chronicon Farfense di Gregorio di Catino. Precedono la Constructio Farfensis e gli Scritti di Ugo di Farfa*, edited by Ugo Balzani, Forzani e C. Tipographi del Senato Palazzo Madama, 2 vols. Rome, 1903, in order: Vol. I, pp. 333, 334, 352, 361, 364; Vol. II, pp. 25, 64, 65, 67. **Archaeology at Farfa Abbey:** See Charles McClendon, *The Imperial Abbey of Farfa: Architectural Currents of the Early Middle Ages*, Yale University Press, 1987, pp. 63-64. ***Tabula Alimentaria*** = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (*CIL*) 11.1147. **The Augustus milestone** reads: IMP(perator) CAESAR DIVI F(ilius) AUGUSTUS COS (= consul) XI TRIBUN(iciae) POTEST(atis) VI EX S(enatus) C(onsulto) XXV: "Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of the Divine [Julius Caesar], Year XI of the Consulate Year VI of Tribunician Power, by Decree of the Senate, 35 (i.e., miles from Rome)." **Horace's villa:** See Bernard Frischer, Jane Crawford & Monica De Simone, *The Horace's Villa Project, 1997-2003*. 2 vols. Archaeopress, 2006. **UN SDG statements on sustainable agriculture:** See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/foodagriculture. **Pompey's wealth:** Peter Greenhalgh, *Pompey: The Roman Alexander*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980, p. 187. **Vat inscription:** See Marzano, p. 92, n. 46, who reads the inscription as evidence that the material costs of capital improvements to a farm were considerable enough to be worth monumentalizing as social capital. **Peutinger's Map:** Richard Talbert, *Rome's World: The Peutinger Map Reconsidered*, Cambridge University Press, 2010; online interface at http://peutinger.atlantides.org. **Living seed bank:** ADD DNA AND C-14 INFO HERE. **Critique of consumer city model:** Neville Morley, *Metropolis and Hinterland: The City of Rome and the Italian Economy 200 B.C - A.D. 200,* Cambridge University Press, 1996; cf. Nathan Rosenstein, *Rome at War: Farms, Families, and Death in the Middle Republic*, University of North Carolina Press, 2004; Girolamo Ferdinando De Simone, "The Agricultural Economy of Pompeii: Surplus and Dependence," in *The Economy of Pompeii*, edited by Miko Flohr & Andrew Wilson, Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 23-51. **Monditalia:** http://oma.eu/projects/monditalia; **Andraos on Peutinger:** Amale Andraos, "Beyond Bigness: Re-Reading the Peutinger Map," *The Avery Review* 1 (2015) (http://averyreview.com/issues/1/beyond-bigness). **On "Pompeianus":** Syme, pp. 317 and 464. **Gaius Castricius Calvus** = *CIL* 11.600, translated and cited by Horden & Purcell, p. 278, adapted slightly.