

# Metropolis and hinterland

*The city of Rome and the Italian economy  
200 B.C.–A.D. 200*

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# Introduction: Rome and Italy

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'Prima urbes inter, divum domus, aurea Roma.'

(Ausonius, *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* 1)

## In praise of Rome

In the summer of A.D. 143, the Greek orator Aelius Aristides arrived in the imperial capital, having made a vow to the gods that, in return for safe passage, he would compose an address in praise of the Roman people:

But, since it was quite impossible to pledge words commensurate with your city, it became evident that I had need of a second prayer. It is perhaps really presumptuous to dare undertake an oration to equal such majesty in a city ... For it is she who first proved that oratory cannot reach every goal. About her not only is it impossible to speak properly, but it is impossible even to see her properly ... For beholding so many hills occupied by buildings, or on plains so many meadows completely urbanised, or so much land brought under the name of one city, who could survey her accurately? And from what point of observation?<sup>1</sup>

The inability of the orator and of oratory to do justice to the subject is a standard part of the prolegomenon to any panegyric, but Rome inspired similar reactions in other visitors. The emperor Constantius, visiting the city in A.D. 357, is said to have 'complained of Fama as either incapable or spiteful, because while always exaggerating everything, in describing what there is in Rome, she becomes spiteful'; one of his companions meanwhile remarked that 'he took comfort in this fact alone, that he had learned that even there men were mortal'.<sup>2</sup> When the city was sacked in 410, 'when the brightest light of the world was extinguished, when the very head of the Roman empire was severed', it was for Jerome as if the whole world had perished.<sup>3</sup> Even after its

<sup>1</sup> *Or.* 26.2, 6; translation and commentary in Oliver (1953).

<sup>2</sup> *Amm. Marc.* 16.10.16-17.

<sup>3</sup> *Commentary on Ezekiel*, prologue.

political eclipse, therefore, and despite the rivalry of Constantinople, Rome remained 'the greatest, most eminent and regal city'.<sup>4</sup>

Aristides' rhetorical portrait was designed to flatter; his views on certain topics – the beneficial effects of Roman imperialism, for example – can hardly be taken as typical of the majority of the inhabitants of the empire, although doubtless they conformed to the Romans' own beliefs. The themes he develops in describing and praising the city itself, however, are found in many other authors, not all of them so content with the Roman achievement. This set of ideas, of conventional responses, reflects not so much the reactions of visitors as the image of the city of Rome in the minds of people who may never have visited the place. Rome was known for certain things, and writers therefore tended to dwell on these themes. Nevertheless, in many cases the hyperbole of orators, historians and tourists was entirely justified.

The first theme is the sheer size of the city. Aristides declares that only some-all-seeing Argus could adequately survey the place, and, borrowing the simile from Homer, he observes that:

Like the snow, she covers mountain peaks, she covers the land intervening, and she goes down to the sea . . . And indeed she is poured out, not just over the level ground, but in a manner with which the simile cannot begin to keep pace she rises great distances into the air, so that her height is not to be compared to a covering of snow but to the peaks themselves.<sup>5</sup>

The elder Pliny, Strabo and Ammianus concentrate on the number and magnificence of the city's monuments (among which the first two count the 'veritable rivers' that supplied fountains and flushed out the sewers), but anonymous tourist guides like the *Notitia* and the *Curiosum*, dating from the fourth century, rely on sheer weight of numbers for their effect, listing the tens of thousands of houses as well as hundreds of bath houses, bakeries, brothels and warehouses.<sup>6</sup> According to the Talmud, 'the great city of Rome has 365 streets, and in each street there are 365 palaces. Each palace has 365 stories, and each storey contains enough food to feed the whole world.'<sup>7</sup>

The population of Rome at the time of Augustus is commonly estimated at around a million. Its nearest rival in the ancient Mediterranean world, Alexandria, contained perhaps half that number; Antioch was roughly the same size, according to Strabo, while Carthage, Pergamum, Ephesus and a few other eastern cities reached 100–200,000.<sup>8</sup> From a comparative perspective, too, Rome was exceptional. No other

<sup>4</sup> *Descriptio Totius Mundi* 55. <sup>5</sup> *Or.* 26.6–8.

<sup>6</sup> Pliny, *HN* 36.101ff; Strabo 5.3.8; *Amm. Marc.* 16.10.13–15; Jordan (1871), 539–74; Nordh (1949); Hermansen (1978), 136–40.

<sup>7</sup> Talmud, *Pesahim* 118b. <sup>8</sup> Duncan-Jones (1982), 260 n.4.

European city had a population of that size before London at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when dramatic changes in the structure of the English economy permitted a massive increase in urbanisation.<sup>9</sup> In the preceding centuries, only two European cities had passed even the half million mark.<sup>10</sup> Further to the east, Istanbul may have contained 700,000 people in the late sixteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Before the Industrial Revolution, cities of a million or more were to be found only in medieval China.<sup>12</sup> The hyperbole of ancient commentators on Rome seems to be entirely justified.

Aristides is equally impressed with the scale of Roman commerce:

Whatever the seasons make grow and whatever countries and rivers and lakes and arts of Hellenes and non-Hellenes produce are brought from every land and sea . . . Whatever is grown and made among each people cannot fail to be here at all times and in abundance . . . The city appears a kind of common emporium of the world. Cargoes from India and, if you will, even from Arabia the Blest, one can see in such numbers as to surmise that in those lands the trees will have been stripped bare and that the inhabitants of those lands, if they need anything, must come here and beg for a share of their own . . . Arrivals and departures by sea never cease, so that the wonder is, not that the harbour has insufficient space for merchant vessels, but that even the sea has enough, if it really does.<sup>13</sup>

A similar picture is painted in the Revelation of St John the Divine, describing the fall of Babylon (Rome is called a second Babylon by Christian writers from 1 Peter onwards).<sup>14</sup>

And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet . . . and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and slaves; and souls of men . . . The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and mourning; saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city . . . for in one hour so great riches is made desolate.' And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, and cried out as they looked at the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?' And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, wherein were made rich all that had their ships in the sea by reason of her costliness.'<sup>15</sup>

Beside such apocalyptic rhetoric, the comments of writers like Strabo about the importance of the Tiber and the sea for the city of Rome seem remarkably tame, but all point towards the vast effort required to keep

<sup>9</sup> Wrigley (1967). <sup>10</sup> de Vries (1984), 270–8. <sup>11</sup> Braudel (1972), 347–8.

<sup>12</sup> Chao (1986), 56. <sup>13</sup> *Or.* 26.11–12, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Mounce (1977), 321–35; Caird (1984), 221–32; 1 Peter 5.13; Augustine, *De civ. D.* 18.2.

<sup>15</sup> Revelation 18.11–19.

such a city adequately provided with the necessities of life.<sup>16</sup> A million people require a minimum of 150,000 tonnes of grain per annum for subsistence; the actual figure for imports must have been significantly higher.<sup>17</sup> Equally vast quantities of staples like wine, oil, vegetables and fruit were needed, to say nothing of more luxurious foodstuffs like meat and spices, of wood for fuel and building work, of marble and of innumerable other commodities.<sup>18</sup> Rome drew these supplies from a vast area; from its empire – as Aristides observed, ‘your farms are Egypt, Sicily and the civilised part of Africa’ – and from the furthest corners of the world. The grain trade alone required a massive infrastructure of ships, sailors, dock workers and merchants; well might those who made their living from the sea mourn the loss of such a market.

Rome was immensely rich. Ausonius describes the city as *aurea*, golden, which has connotations of both wealth and decadent luxuriousness.<sup>19</sup> The passage of the Talmud cited above envisages Rome as a place of superabundance, with each building containing enough food to feed the whole world. Another passage observes: ‘ten *kabs* of wisdom descended to the world: nine were taken by Palestine and one by the rest of the world . . . Ten *kabs* of wealth descended to the world: nine were taken by Rome and one by the rest of the world.’<sup>20</sup> The source of this wealth is equally plain: the empire. Aristides claims that ‘if one looks at the whole empire and reflects how small a fraction rules the whole world, he may be amazed at the city, but when he has beheld the city herself and the boundaries of the city, he can no longer be amazed that the entire civilised world is ruled by one so great’.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the empire itself was indeed the greater marvel in the eyes of contemporaries – after all, Alexander the Great had conquered only barbarians, whereas the Romans ruled the people of the civilised world. From our perspective, however, it is the size of Rome that is remarkable, to be explained by the possession of such an empire.

### The pre-industrial metropolis

Even from a comparative perspective, Rome was an exceptionally large city. The reasons for the rarity of such ‘megalopoleis’ in history are to be found in the nature of the economies of the societies that had to support them. In a pre-industrial, primarily agrarian economy there are strict limits on the extent to which productivity may be increased, and therefore on the amount of surplus available; the maintenance of a huge

<sup>16</sup> Strabo 5.3.7; Cicero, *Rep.* 2.4–5. <sup>17</sup> Garnsey (1988a), 191.

<sup>18</sup> Loane (1938); D’Arms and Kopff (1980). <sup>19</sup> D. G. N. Barker (1993).

<sup>20</sup> Talmud, *Kiddushin* 49b. <sup>21</sup> *Or.* 26.9.

population of non-producers in a metropolis requires the labour of many millions of agricultural workers and the surplus production of a vast area. Moreover, the concentration of these non-producers in a single large city creates further problems. Transport in a pre-industrial economy is expensive; the cost of transporting a bulky staple like grain long distances overland might be prohibitively expensive. It is no coincidence that most large pre-industrial cities were located on navigable rivers or on the sea.

Even if these logistical problems could be surmounted, there is the problem of how such giant cities paid for their keep. Given the low level of demand and high cost of transport in a pre-industrial economy, what goods or services could a metropolis provide that could not be offered more cheaply by smaller centres at a more local level? The simple answer is that the metropolis is invariably a 'political' city; the services it provides are those of a centralised administrative system and a concrete manifestation of the glory of the state. The population of the metropolis is fed from the taxes paid by the rest of the country; the high costs of transport are subsidised from state revenues. The political capitals of the ancient world, medieval China and early modern Europe are in fact prime examples of what Werner Sombart called the 'consumption city': 'By a consumption city I mean one which pays for its maintenance . . . not with its own products, because it does not need to. It derives its maintenance rather on the basis of a legal claim, such as taxes or rents, without having to deliver return values.'<sup>22</sup> Not all of the urban population were literally 'consumers', of course; all such cities contained large numbers of petty craftsmen and shopkeepers, but they were a dependent element, 'whose existence was determined by the share of the consumption fund allowed to them by the consumption class'.<sup>23</sup>

Finley described ancient Rome as the quintessential consumer city, and certainly it fits the model very neatly.<sup>24</sup> A sizeable proportion of the grain required to feed its population was collected as tax from provinces like Sicily, Africa and Egypt, transported to the city at the state's expense, and distributed to 200,000 or more members of the *plebs*; by the Principate this distribution was free of charge.<sup>25</sup> The idea that the urban masses were a pampered mob, maintained in idleness with 'bread and circuses', has long been abandoned by historians; the populace needed money with which to pay for milling and baking the grain and to buy wine, oil and other foodstuffs.<sup>26</sup> However, they did not earn their keep in the manufacture of goods for export. The opportunities for employment in Rome were considerable, but they lay in the great state building

<sup>22</sup> Sombart (1916), I, 142-3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Finley (1985a), 194.

<sup>25</sup> Garnsey (1988a), 198-243.

<sup>26</sup> Whittaker (1993c).

projects, in servicing the needs of the land-owning elite whose political activities centred on the capital, and in the docks and *tabernae*, helping to supply the rest of the population.<sup>27</sup> The description of Babylon's desolation in Revelation announces that 'the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsmen, of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more in thee; and the voice of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee', while Ammianus records that in the fourth century the city contained 3,000 dancing girls and the same number of dancing masters.<sup>28</sup> Inscriptions provide evidence of more prosaic trades, but they all seem to relate to what Finley termed 'petty commodity production' for local consumption.<sup>29</sup>

There is no evidence for any large-scale exports from Rome; the city consumed almost everything produced there and still demanded more. The wages of its craftsmen, shopkeepers, porters and labourers were paid ultimately by the people of the empire, whose surplus was collected as taxes and rent, taken to the city of Rome and spent there by the state and by the land-owning elite. The size and wealth of the city were entirely due to its role as a political centre, head of the empire and therefore one of the chief beneficiaries of the spoils of empire. It offered nothing more tangible in return for its keep. For most contemporaries, or those of them whose thoughts on the subject are preserved, the city of Rome embodied the greatness of its empire, which brought peace and prosperity to the world. From a modern perspective, the views of Victor Hugo – 'the Roman sewer engulfed the world, sapping town and country alike' – or the vision of Revelation of Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations, drunk with the blood of the saints, may seem more apt.

This characterisation of Rome as a consumer city is, however, only the first step in understanding its place in the economy and society of the empire. The fact that its supplies were paid for by taxes rather than the profits from commerce or industry does not detract from the scale and importance of those supplies. A sizeable portion of surplus production was expended in moving goods to the city from all parts of the empire; this supported an infrastructure of ship owners, merchants and dock workers – as the author of Revelation observed. Large profits could be made by those involved in supplying Rome: the real-life counterparts of Trimalchio, who lost one fortune in shipping wine to the city and made another with a cargo of wine, bacon, beans, perfume and slaves.<sup>30</sup>

Study of Rome's food supply has moved on considerably from the

<sup>27</sup> Brunt (1980); Pleket (1993b), 19–20.

<sup>28</sup> Revelation 18.22–3; Amm. Marc. 14.6.19.

<sup>29</sup> Finley (1985a), 194.

<sup>30</sup> Petronius, *Sat.* 76; cf. K. Hopkins (1983b), 101–2.

compilation of lists of imports known from literary sources.<sup>31</sup> The shipment of grain to the city has received particular attention, partly because of the obvious importance of this staple and partly because of the volume of surviving evidence relating to the *annona*, the system by which tax grain was supplied to the populace.<sup>32</sup> Study of the movement of other commodities has been transformed in the last twenty years by the evidence provided by archaeology, with increasing knowledge of the amphorae in which oil, wine and *garum* were brought to Rome from Italy, Gaul, Spain, Africa and other parts of the empire.<sup>33</sup> Excavations at Ostia and Rome have revealed not only the different areas from which the city drew its supplies but also the changing patterns of this trade; excavated shipwrecks also offer evidence for the organisation of the city's food supply.<sup>34</sup> Debate continues on many aspects of this trade – for example, on whether the Roman elite were directly involved – and the amphorae alone cannot answer many of these questions, but as direct evidence for the movement of goods around the Mediterranean they provide an essential starting-point for such discussions.<sup>35</sup>

The effects of the city's demands on the regions that supplied it have received far less attention. The economic impact of Rome on different parts of its empire, unlike its political, social and cultural impact, has not yet received a full-length study; its likely parameters have so far been discussed only in very general terms.<sup>36</sup> The reasons for this curious neglect are doubtless various; they include the prevalence of a view of 'economic development' that privileges trade and manufacture over agriculture, and the fact that evidence for changes in the countryside, other than scattered literary references, has become widely available only in the last twenty-odd years with the proliferation of archaeological survey projects. The main aim of this book is to help to fill this gap by offering a detailed study of the influence of the metropolis on one part of its empire.

It may seem extremely improbable that a city the size of Rome could have failed to have a significant impact on many parts of its hinterland – certainly this is the lesson to be drawn from comparison with other pre-industrial metropoleis, as will be seen in the next chapter – and therefore it can be argued that a study of this kind is long overdue, requiring little

<sup>31</sup> As in Loane (1938).

<sup>32</sup> Rickman (1971) and (1980); Casson (1980); Garnsey (1983) and (1988a), 198–243; Sirks (1991).

<sup>33</sup> Panella (1970) and (1981); Hesnard (1980); Rodriguez-Almeida (1984); Tchernia (1986); *Amphores*.

<sup>34</sup> Peacock and Williams (1986); Parker (1992); generally, Greene (1986), 17–44.

<sup>35</sup> Paterson (1982); Tchernia (1989); Whittaker (1985) and (1989).

<sup>36</sup> E.g. Garnsey and Saller (1987), 58–62; Pleket (1993b).

further justification. However, although the perspective offered here is new, the questions involved are somewhat well worn. This book lies under the shadow of two long-running debates in ancient history: on the one hand, that concerning the nature of the ancient economy, the economic role of cities and the possibility of growth and development; on the other, the much-disputed economic history of Italy in the late Republic and early Principate. I hope that I can offer a new perspective on the latter question, and a test case for certain ideas in the former.

Let us begin with the theoretical side, the historiography of which is convoluted but fascinating.<sup>37</sup> For the question of the impact of Rome on its hinterland, two lines of argument are of particular importance.

The first is that of the 'primitivist'/'substantivist' school associated with Moses Finley, which plays down the possibility of any economic growth or development in antiquity and emphasises the pre-modern, 'embedded' nature of the ancient economy and ancient economic thought.<sup>38</sup> According to this model, the city of Rome (as the archetypal consumer city) was a parasite, creaming off the surplus production of the rest of the empire and consuming it unproductively. It may be considered a stagnating influence on the economy of the empire; at best it simply replaced a class of local exploiters with more distant masters. If the city had paid for what it took through goods and services, it might have had a more positive impact – but the limitations of the ancient economic mentality and the dominance of agriculture and landed wealth made this more or less inconceivable. Finley did note in passing that Rome had a considerable impact on parts of the countryside which supplied it with wine and pork, but the point is not elaborated; there was no effect on urban production for export, which he sees as the key to economic development.<sup>39</sup> In general, the size of the city of Rome is explained by its political role and the consumption habits of the land-owning elite; it may be said to embody all the tendencies that kept the ancient economy undeveloped.

An alternative theory is that put forward by Keith Hopkins; namely, that the collection and expenditure of taxes by the Roman state were an important stimulus to trade.<sup>40</sup> Taxes were for the most part collected in the rich inner provinces of the empire (Italy was exempt) and spent in Rome and in frontier provinces; to raise cash to pay them, he argues, the inner provinces had to sell produce to the city and the army, supporting a massive expansion of trade in the late Republic and early Principate.

<sup>37</sup> For an introduction, see K. Hopkins (1983c); Garnsey and Saller (1987), 43–63; Jongman (1988a), 15–55.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. Finley (1985a); discussed by Frederiksen (1975). <sup>39</sup> (1985a), 150.

<sup>40</sup> K. Hopkins (1978b), (1980), (1983b) and (1983c).

Hopkins mentions in passing that the need to pay taxes might inspire an increase in the volume of agricultural production.<sup>41</sup> He does not elaborate, but in an earlier article he links the expansion of Italian towns, among them the city of Rome, to the development of slave agriculture in Italy in the second century B.C.<sup>42</sup> The clear implication of the 'taxes and trade' model is that the demands of the city of Rome would have a twofold influence on its hinterland; farmers had to give up a portion of their surplus (possibly no more than they had been paying before the Romans arrived), but they could also benefit from the profits to be made in supplying those who benefited from the proceeds of empire.

Both these theories are formulated at the 'macro' level, dealing with the ancient economy as a whole, or at least with the entire Roman empire over six hundred years. Their very scope and importance makes them extraordinarily difficult to falsify or otherwise disprove – as Hopkins openly admits. For example, there is no consensus on the nature of the economy even of a city as well-documented as Pompeii; if one point of view were to win widespread acceptance, the town could then be dismissed as an exception, tangential to the wider debate.<sup>43</sup> It would appear that ancient economic history will continue to be a matter of choosing between different sets of basic premises (the two summarised above are by no means the only theories on offer) on the basis of personal inclination.

That is not to say that case studies, starting from one of these general theories, have no value; it is certainly a step forward to be able to argue that, in one particular instance at least, the evidence appears to support one view rather than another. The present study inclines to the Hopkins view of the Roman empire; within the limits of a pre-industrial economy, some economic growth was possible, and the growth of the city of Rome was an important stimulus to such growth. In the next chapter this argument will be presented in more detail from two complementary perspectives; a theoretical and historiographical critique of the primitivist/substantivist view of ancient cities and economic growth, and a comparative study of the place of the metropolis in the economies of medieval China and early modern Europe.

The remainder of the book examines the influence of the city of Rome on the economy of a particular region, Italy between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. The first date marks the beginning of the period when Rome may be considered a true metropolis; the latter is largely a matter of convenience, since the question of the fates of Rome and Italy under the later Empire demands a full-length study of its own. Four hundred years seems to be a

<sup>41</sup> (1980), 101–2.      <sup>42</sup> (1978a), 11–15.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. Jongman (1988a); Purcell (1990); Laurence (1994), 8–10, 51–69.

suitable period for the study of long-term economic and demographic movements, especially since the evidence of archaeological survey is based on pottery chronologies which may span several centuries.

The restriction of the study to Italy is also a matter of convenience, but there is no doubt that it makes a particularly interesting subject. As Rome's immediate hinterland Italy was likely to be affected earliest by the city's demands for goods and people, and arguably affected to a greater extent than other regions. The addition to the empire of provinces like Sicily, Africa and Egypt relieved it of the need to provide all of Rome's grain supply; land could be used for the production of different (and more market-oriented) crops without fear of food crisis. Moreover, after 89 B.C. all Italians became Roman citizens, and Roman citizens had not been taxed directly since 167. The Italian farmer therefore had a larger surplus at his disposal; he was not forced into the market (that part of Hopkins' model is inapplicable), but he was in a better position to choose to respond to the incentives offered there.

Given these twin factors of tax exemption and proximity to the market, it is somewhat surprising that the subject of 'Rome and Italy' has, at least in its economic aspects, been so neglected. In studies of Rome's food supply, most attention is paid to imports from the provinces, whether grain from Africa and Egypt or wine and oil from Spain and Gaul; Italy's contribution is less visible, and is therefore played down or ignored altogether. Conversely, studies of the development of Italy tend to deny any significant role to the Roman market, and this has led to some remarkably negative views of the state of the Italian economy through most of the period in question. Provincial economies are seen as dynamic, developing rapidly under the stimulus of 'Romanisation'; Italian agriculture limps from stagnation to crisis, embarking on a terminal decline from the late first century A.D.<sup>44</sup>

The evidence for widespread crisis in this period, rather than a crisis limited to certain regions and to a particular form of agricultural organisation, is unconvincing.<sup>45</sup> The nature of these changes will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. For the moment, we may note that a significant feature of the prophecies of doom is their obsession with exports as the determinant of an economy's health; the spread of villas in Italy is linked to the growth of a Gallic market for wine, and so the loss of this market under the Principate must spell disaster for Italian producers. Clearly this is an excessively modernising, formalist perspective – 'balance of payments' problems were not a major feature of the ancient economy – but it also ignores entirely the fact that the Roman

<sup>44</sup> Rostovtzeff (1957), 192–206; Carandini (1989).

<sup>45</sup> Patterson (1987).

market was as large and profitable as ever.<sup>46</sup> If the city of Rome is restored to the picture, the crisis of the villas is seen to be a far more complicated phenomenon than the traditional thesis of Italian decline would suggest, requiring a more sophisticated explanation.

The city plays a similarly subsidiary role in many accounts of the other great crisis in Italian agriculture, that of the post-Hannibalic period. For Rostovtzeff and Carandini, the establishment of the villa system is tied to the market for wine in Gaul, Spain and the Danube region; Rome is barely mentioned, and other crops (particularly grain) are more or less ignored.<sup>47</sup> Other work has redressed the balance somewhat: Toynbee and Hopkins place much more emphasis on the growth of the urban market in Italy, including the capital; Purcell and Tchernia have offered more sophisticated accounts of the spread of viticulture (in the latter case, backed by a careful study of the archaeological evidence), while Spurr has restored cereal cultivation to its rightful position in Italian agriculture.<sup>48</sup> A short piece by de Neeve proposes a model for the changes of the second century B.C. centred on the demands of the city of Rome, making use of von Thünen's model of agricultural location.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the quantity and quality of this work, I believe that this study still has something to contribute to the question of Italy's development during the late Republic. The general theories of agricultural change have not been properly tested against the evidence provided by archaeological survey; this is particularly important in the case of de Neeve's work, whose use of geographical models (especially the choice of von Thünen) is very similar to my own. Furthermore, previous historians have seriously underestimated the demographic impact of Rome on Italy; its demands for migrants were a significant factor in the economic transformations of this period.

After the discussion of the place of the metropolis in a pre-industrial economy, therefore, I turn to the question of demography; the population of Rome and its dynamics, the demand for migrants and the effects of this demand on the rest of Italy. Evidence from early modern Europe suggests that pre-industrial urban populations were incapable of maintaining their own numbers, let alone of expanding, without regular and large-scale immigration from the countryside. Post-Hannibalic Rome was an attractive destination for many people; the redistribution of population between city and country, and between agriculture and non-agricultural employment, has important economic and social implica-

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Frank (1927), 424–31.

<sup>47</sup> Rostovtzeff (1957), 1–36; Carandini (1989).

<sup>48</sup> Toynbee (1965), 155–89, 332–40; K. Hopkins (1978a), 1–98; Purcell (1985); Tchernia (1986); Spurr (1986).

<sup>49</sup> (1984a).

tions, while the development of a huge urban market is central to the model of metropolitan influence.

The third chapter offers a model of agricultural change in response to the demands of the expanding city, drawing on geographical theories and taking into consideration the slowness and cost of transport, variations in climate and soil and the economic mentality of Roman landowners. The central chapters of the book then test this model against three areas of Italy in turn, using evidence from literary sources and archaeological survey: the immediate hinterland of the city, the *suburbium*, whose economy and society were inextricably linked to the fortunes of the capital from a very early date; the central Italian heartland, home of the market-oriented villa system; finally, more distant regions like Apulia, the Po Valley and the Apennine highlands. The final chapter examines the development of systems of marketing and trade and the changing patterns of urbanisation in Italy under the influence of the metropolis, touching upon the wider question of the role of the city of Rome in the process of social and cultural change generally characterised as 'Romanisation'. Whether or not the development is to be labelled 'progressive', it is clear that the effort required to support this 'quintessential consumer city' affected the economy and society of almost every part of Roman Italy.