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EDWARD CHAMPLIN

## Owners and Neighbours at Ligure Baebiani

### I

As landed property is by far the most important element in Roman economic history, it is reasonable that considerable attention should be paid to it. Yet beyond intensive research into such important matters as patterns of tenure and methods of farming it is only recently that property has begun to be looked at in the broader context of Roman society. It is with the latter that this paper intends to deal, specifically with land as the foundation of Rome's economic, social and political elite. Even within this restricted universe there are innumerable questions still to be asked about the role of the landed elite as the channel between regional concerns and the centres of power, about the connections between land and power, about the relations between town and town, *pagus* and *pagus*, estate and estate. First, however, one must look at the evidence closely to determine just what it can and cannot tell us.

Easily the most important non-literary evidence for the history of property in Roman Italy is the two alimentary tables from Veleia in Liguria and from Ligure Baebiani in Samnium, those monuments to Trajan's attempts to subsidize the youth of Italy. Whether the purpose of the *alimenta* was to encourage the population of the country or its agriculture is a difficult question but here irrelevant. The two *tabulae*, particularly the lavish one from Veleia, list in the fashion of the census all of the local landholders who received loans from the state (the interest on which was paid into the scheme), with useful information about the estates pledged, their value, and the names of neighbouring landlords. It was F. G. DE PACHTÈRE who, following some remarks of MOMMSEN, first pointed out that the importance of such a document as the Veleia table lies not so much in its evidence for the *alimenta* or for the development of local place-names as in its rich material for the history of property in northern Italy. In his posthumous monograph: *La table hypothécaire de Veleia* (1920), DE PACHTÈRE, by close analysis of the names – names of owners and neighbours, of properties and *pagi* – was able to produce a masterpiece of historical topography: to draw up a rough map of the *pagi* of the region and to correlate the nature of properties with their location and altitude; to demonstrate the gradual erosion of the Ligurian heritage in the face of Roman colonization, and its areas of resistance; to show where and how smallholdings declined and *latifundia* spread over the land, and how old families grew and flourished or passed away to be replaced by alien and often libertine intruders. Whatever its errors

in detail or conclusion, DE PACHTÈRE's work should be taken as a model for the kind of imaginative reconstruction which is possible from such bleak material.

The alimentary table from Ligure Baebiani (CIL IX 1455) is a much less promising document for its sins of both omission and commission, yet it too has received an equally brilliant treatment by P. VEYNE.<sup>1</sup> VEYNE was able to elucidate the general topography of the region (north of Beneventum), the nature of the agricultural units mentioned in the document, the complex calculations involved, and (elaborately if not quite convincingly) the several stages of documentation behind the actual surviving bronze tablet. He then turned, with somewhat less satisfactory results, to analysis of the social makeup of the group of landowners involved, but his method depended in large part on the random evidence of other, mostly undated inscriptions, and it has been called into question.<sup>2</sup> He was also forced to admit the sad truth that not even the roughest of maps (of *pagi*, let alone of estates) could be drawn up, for the simple reasons that only a small proportion of land in the area was pledged to the scheme, most owners did not pledge all of their property, and much of the property recorded lacks full indication of *pagus* or neighbours.<sup>3</sup> Most discouragingly, given the defective nature of the document (and in contrast with Veleia) nothing could be said about the history and devolution of landed property at Ligure Baebiani, beyond the simple observation that from an unknown date all property there had changed hands.

I want to suggest three areas in which the table of Ligure Baebiani should be interrogated again, not so much in the hope of reaching firm new conclusions as to point out the sort of questions which ought to be asked and to see what answers can be extracted from a very unusual document. First, how much can we learn about the history of private property at Ligure Baebiani, that is, of its transference by inheritance or other means over the years and of the growth and dissolution of estates? Second, how much can we learn – from the document itself, that is, without importing uncertain outside evidence – of the social profile of the landed gentry at a particular moment in history, here in A.D. 101? And third, what can we learn about the relations of this local elite with the municipalities of the region and with Rome itself? Unfortunately answers (or the answers we want) may not be forthcoming, thanks primarily to the defects of the document itself, and it is from these that we must take our beginning.

## II

The original tablet presented three columns of individual pledges beneath a brief dated preamble running across its top. Some 66 of these *obligationes praediorum* are

<sup>1</sup> MEFR 69, 1957, 81–135, and 70, 1958, 177–241.

<sup>2</sup> Extended by P. GARNSEY, *Historia* 17, 1968, 368, and sharply questioned by R. P. DUNCAN-JONES, *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, 1974, 304.

<sup>3</sup> For present meagre knowledge of the map based on place-names, see L. MAIO, *RAL* 31, 1976, 293 n. 19.

represented, in no discernible order. Each entry gives more or less the same information in more or less the same order: the owner's name; the name of the estate pledged (usually called a *fundus*); its location, specified in terms of territory (usually), *pagus*, and one or two neighbours; the estimated value of the estate and the appropriate sum lent by the state; and, in the margin, the amount of interest on that loan paid to the *alimenta* by the proprietor. Where more than one estate is pledged, each entry is followed by its estimated value and the amount of the individual loan on it, while a single figure remains in the margin, representing the combined interest on all of that proprietor's loans. And in nine cases there is an additional element, the name of an agent who registered the property in the owner's name.

The physical state of the tablet gives cause for great concern.<sup>4</sup> Its first column lists 16 *obligationes* and the beginning of a seventeenth; the second lists 18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>; and the third, which deteriorates markedly in both draftsmanship and accuracy, lists the remaining 31. When the tablet was discovered in the early 1830s, its left-hand side was gone, carrying with it a section of the preamble and a large part of column 1. The loss is serious, particularly since the names of the first seventeen proprietors are lost, standing as they did at the head (that is, on the left side) of their entries. Further, the name of no single *fundus* or *adfinis* stands full and intact in column 1, and only one *pagus* name survives complete. Thus we are faced at the outset with a simple choice of data, one set comprising 48<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> entries in two columns, reasonably intact, and the other of 66 entries in three columns, much of it quite unsure or conjectural. The former will be used here, with the constant reminder that what is lost may substantially affect the conclusions.

Whatever the physical defects, a far more fundamental problem lies in the accuracy of the text. It is certainly based, perhaps at more than one remove, on formal, accurate and complete census information. It is equally clearly an abridged version of a fuller register.<sup>5</sup> HENZEN, MOMMSEN, and VEYNE were each able to point to numerous visible errors in the document without losing confidence in its accuracy. Yet the trouble is that even now more examples can be added, to the point that occasional error begins to look like general incompetence. To be sure, one can show by comparison with the far more elegant Veleia table that the process of abridgment is sometimes at fault. For example, as others have seen, Ligures Baebiani everywhere drops the words *obligare debet*, changing the accusative *fundum* to the genitive *fundi*, with *obligatione*; nevertheless, at least two accusatives (1, 23 and 1, 29) escaped the transcriber's notice. Similarly, there are some simple and obvious omissions, in one spot

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<sup>4</sup> I was fortunate to be granted access to the tablet in the Museo Nazionale Romano in Rome in June 1979, and am most grateful for the hospitality of the staff there. Since MOMMSEN's day small fragments of the tablet have been chipped off and parts of it (especially in column 3) are worn to the point of illegibility, but where it is legible MOMMSEN's readings (CIL IX 1455) are almost invariably correct. VEYNE, who did not see the table, gives a version of it which is incorrect in many details.

<sup>5</sup> P. VEYNE, MEFR 70, 1958, 177–204.



the name of the *fundus* (3, 82), elsewhere the name of the *pagus* (3, 41), here the term of the *adfinis* (3, 15), there the neighbour's cognomen (3, 40): all attributable perhaps to haste.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, some of the muddle (e.g., the neighbour's name listed before the *pagus*, at 2, 69) may derive from a previous document. All of these may be trivial, but they point a direction. They might be classified as instantly corrigible errors. Slightly worse are the three instances of the letter *f* (for *fiunt*) where the word *in* is required (2, 50; 3, 5; 3, 12): that is, at first glance we are dealing with a figure representing the total value of two or more estates, where in fact what we have is the amount of the loan. Trivial too, perhaps, but an indication that the scribe really was not thinking about the content of his text. This becomes more serious when we find numerical errors, figures which are simply incorrect (as at 2, 43–46 in the margin; 2, 79; 3, 26) but which can be rectified. Yet that requires calculation, however simple, and the casual observer might not notice it. Worse, it is again not the scribe alone who is at fault but his source as well. One entry (2, 17–29) lists seven estates with their individual values, yet the sum total of these valuations neatly omits one property (2, 29), reading HS 466,000 for what should be 501,000. The error is simple, but then so is the register, and there is no excuse: this is not a formal archival document, it is meant for public reference and display. But of what use to anyone, especially the proud and public-spirited landowners being commemorated, was such a sloppy monument?

Ulpian, in his work on the census, prescribed the basic form for the registration of land: *nomen fundi cuiusque; et in qua civitate et in quo pago sit; et quos duos vicinos proximos habeat*. (Digest. 50, 15, 4). The register from Liguens Baebiani certainly reflects such a *forma censualis*, with the single common exception that normally only one neighbour is named.<sup>7</sup> But there is no uniformity. Of 64 properties registered in the second and third columns by some 49 owners, only 16 indicate the territory, 47 the *pagus*, and 51 the neighbour.<sup>8</sup> Or, to look at it in another way, only 11 give all three required items (territory, *pagus*, neighbour), 34 give two of them, 13 give one, and 6 give none at all. Doubtless much of this information would be redundant: for instance, the name of a *pagus* is not required of the proprietor at 3, 21, the *Res Publica Baebianorum* itself, and the precision of naming both *pagus* and territory may be generally unnecessary in a small area. But to name neither territory nor *pagus* nor neighbour, indeed simply to omit the neighbour (as one-fifth of the entries do) is to invite confusion. On the other hand, if the document is intended more for the owner's publicity than for precise record, it seems rather pointless for so many other entries to attempt precision. We might then suspect that the register lay at the mercy of the individual proprietors, recording whatever information they cared to submit. But if

<sup>6</sup> It should be understood that while the words *fundi* and *pago* do appear (in the first two instances) and the neighbour is named (in the third), there is no gap in the text.

<sup>7</sup> Exceptionally, two neighbours are named at 2, 2 and 2, 45. Other instances refer to joint or corporate owners.

<sup>8</sup> I include those properties registered *pago s(supra) s(cripto)*.

that is so, how to account for the entry of the largest contributor, Marcius Rufinus (2, 17)? Of the seven estates he mentions, the first three are simply names, the fourth adds a neighbour, the fifth and sixth have *pagus* and neighbour, and the seventh has territory, *pagus* and neighbour! Likewise, in the second and third columns, eight other owners are entered with two properties each; four of them were as capricious as Rufinus in withholding information for one estate which they saw no objection to offering for others (3, 13; 3, 17; 3, 24; 3, 28). But rather than question the motives of several men it is surely preferable to question the document itself, or its source. Particularly arresting is the entry for the owner C. Valerius Pietas (3, 17–20), who registers two properties, the *fundus Herculeianus* and the *fundus Vibianus*, the second located *pago s.s.* Unfortunately, there is no *pagus supra scriptus*, that is, the *fundus Herculeianus* is not located at all. One might begin to suspect that the Ligure Baebiani table is not merely sloppy and idiosyncratic in execution, but also deeply untrustworthy in its content.

The heart of the document lies in its names, the names of landowners, properties, *pagi*, and territories. Again, many of the errors here are easy and obvious, sometimes questions rather of orthography: Naeratius for Neratius at 2, 8 (correct at 2, 14, 16 and 52, but cf. *puaellae* for *puellae* in the preamble), or Cerellianus for Caerellianus at 2, 53, or Lybicus for Libycus at 3, 33, Valentiniani for Valentiniani (3, 77), Veiaeani for Veiani (2, 34). But two call for special attention. Twice (2, 38; 2, 60) *pago Mefano* appears instead of the correct *pago Meflano*, and once it is even displayed as *pago Mefani* (2, 63). Now this is most curious. Of the 19 *pagi* apparently mentioned in the text, by far the most common in recurrence is the *pagus Meflanus*, appearing by name nine times, plus twice as *pagus s.s.*, and once being inadvertently omitted. Six times out of nine the scribe got the name right, and three times he got it wrong.<sup>9</sup> One marvels at the intelligence engaged. More to the point is an item at 2, 15, a neighbour registered as *Iulio Saturtino*. The error is ludicrously simple, and no one has hesitated for a moment to emend to Iulius Saturninus, particularly when there is an owner by that name at 2, 51. But the principle is important: Saturninus is one of the most common of Latin cognomina, Saturtinus is both unattested and invalid, therefore emendation is required. Why then should we accept any other oddity in the document at face value?

The 19 *pagi* offer some easy problems. *Herculaneus* (2, 23, 2, 56) is clearly the same as *Herculanus* (3, 34), as everybody has seen. MOMMSEN noted that *Horticulturalus* (3, 68) was rather reminiscent of *Articulanus* (3, 12), and the similarity is surely too close for coincidence, particularly when we find in these *pagi* two proprietors (the only proprietors cited in either) from the same prominent family, Octavius Martialis in *Articulanus*, Octavius Proculus in *Horticulturalus*. But what about the unique *Libicanus* and *Libitinus*? They are not as similar to each other perhaps, but they do appear

<sup>9</sup> Significantly perhaps, the three errors are in unbroken sequence, set off by correct versions at 2, 25 and 2, 73.

side by side on the table (3, 49–3, 55), a Vibbius Modestus is listed as a landowner in both, and while *Libicanus* is a good Ligurian tribal name *Libitinus* is rather bizarre, to say the least. The names and number of the *pagi* are a matter of critical importance, yet our text seems capable of unusual variety.

The chief clue to its nature is provided at the beginning of column 2. Lines 1 ff., the conclusion of the entry of an unknown owner, register the *fundus Pastorianus pertica Beneventana pago Aequano, adf. Priscia Restituta et pop.*<sup>10</sup> Then, the next obligation notices first a *fundus Pomponianus* owned by a Crispia Restituta, *pertica Benevent., pago Aequano in Ligustino, adf. Nasidio Vitale*. A Priscia Restituta and a Crispia Restituta in the same territory and the same *pagus* strain credulity. Now Crispus is a name well known to the area, appearing both in Ligures Baebiani itself (CIL IX 1488) and in the *pagus Veianus* (IX 1515) which is mentioned elsewhere on the table. Priscus, on the other hand, is unknown to the indices of CIL IX (that is, beyond the reference to this very line, IX 1455, 2, 2). «Priscia Restituta» did not exist.

The entry at 3, 41 is equally interesting. It is obvious that the scribe has inadvertently omitted the *pagus*, and the name of the estate (*f. Cispellianus*) is somewhat curious, but what of the owner, «Stafonius Secundus»? The nomen is otherwise absent from CIL IX, but we do find a C. Safronius C.f. Ste. Secundus, aedile and decurion at Beneventum, curator and a munificent patron of the *pagus Veianus* in A.D. 167.<sup>11</sup> To account for the corruption of Safronius into Stafonius in the text we need look no further than the next entry but one, with the proprietors Statoria Prisca and Statorius Pudens (3, 45, cf. L. Statorius Restitutus at 2, 69). If Safronius, what then of the landowners Licinius Liberalis (3, 59) and Livinius Proculus (3, 49)? Licinius appears more than fifty times in CIL IX, Livinius is absent (as is Livineius). And what of Antius Gamus (3, 35), one of the major participants in the scheme, and the Antistii Iustus and Priscus (3, 62)? The property of the latter lay in the *pagus Martialis*; the *pagus* of the former is absent (which should be suspicious by now), but a neighbour is named, one of whose properties lay in the *pagus Martialis*; and there are no other Antii in CIL IX.

Less clearly, there may be a problem with that euphonious trio Naevius Vitalis (2, 75), Nasidius Vitalis (2, 6), and (Nas)ellius Vitalis (1, 71, confirmed by CIL IX 1618, a Nasellius Vitalis magistrate at Beneventum), the first and the last both located in *pertica Beneventana*; or with Villius Flaccus (3, 13. 15), Suellius Flaccus (2, 21. 65) and Sulpicius Flaccus (3, 38), the first two in the *pagus Salutaris*.<sup>12</sup> The entry at 3, 33 records Octavius Lybicus, owner of the *fundus Petillianus* in the *pagus Herculanus*; that at 3, 39 has Livinius Proculus, with the *fundus Peticianus* in the *pagus Libicanus*.

<sup>10</sup> The words *pago Aequano* are missing from VEYNE's text.

<sup>11</sup> CIL IX 1503, cf. 3910, L. Saf. It should be noted here that MOMMSEN's reading of the fundus name as «Valintianus» at 3, 77 is erroneous, and tacitly corrected in his index to the inscription.

<sup>12</sup> To complicate matters, Sulpicius is a neighbour of the *fundus Albanus* in the *pagus Albanus*: the former is a well-attested nomen, the latter a unique occurrence.

Lybicus, Herculanius, Livinius and Libicanus all admit different spellings: who can tell then whether the two *fundi* involved do not in fact bear the same name? The question is of some importance. If we are dealing with one nomen, not two, we will have gained some notion of previous ownership of the land and of the wealth of a forgotten family.

The clearest instance of the importance of this problem lies at 3, 77, in the declaration of the *fundus Senianus Valintinianus* (sic) *Octavianus* by a Stenius Felix who is (on the surface if it) the third wealthiest landowner at Ligures Baebiani. Now Senii are absent from CIL IX, but three Sten(n)ii appear in the area. The required emendation to *f. Stenianus* is simple but its implication is serious, for the table has obscured a historical fact, that is, that Stenius Felix is one of a handful of owners to declare an ancestral estate, one which has expanded to absorb in some manner the property of another of the leading families of the area (see below), the Octavii.

In short, the document is riddled with error, some of it historically significant.

### III

Can a history of property at Ligures Baebiani be reconstructed from the names of the properties involved in the Trajanic alimentary scheme? Apparently not. The typical *fundus* registered in an *obligatio* preserves the names of one, two, three or even more primitive owners, thus perhaps reflecting the previous aggregation or dissolution of estates, and of course we know the name of its owner in A.D. 101. But we have no idea when the primitive owners lived, or even if they were in any way contemporaries, and the rate of evolution is highly variable. Moreover we do not have and cannot construct from the evidence available a map of the relative positions of the estates concerned, hence we cannot trace the growth of *latifundia*, say, or the relative worth of property in upland and lowland, or the rise and fall of family agglomerations. At best then, perhaps, we should despair with VEYNE that from an unknown date virtually all property changed hands, and leave it at that.<sup>13</sup>

On closer inspection the problem looks even worse. First, the landowners represented are only a part of the propertied class in the area. The second two columns list some 48 owners (plus the unknown at the head of column 2). They also record some 29 private neighbours. 6 of these neighbours (if we include Crispia Restituta) appear also as owners, but the remaining 23 include some of the great men of the region, counting among their number senators and knights (see below), who often appear more than once: not only is our picture of the landowning class incomplete, it excludes some of the greatest landowners.

Second, the names of the estates: when were they fixed? DE PACHTÈRE suggested (and VEYNE developed) a connection with the Augustan census recorded by Cassius

<sup>13</sup> VEYNE 205.

Dio, but there is simply no evidence, and to tie such fluid data to an artificial year is to obscure historical change. Even if we were sure of a date, it would be of minor importance, for such an Augustan document must inevitably have reflected previous historical changes itself, just as the Liges Baebiani tablet would reflect development between Augustus and Trajan. However, the general principle may be evoked, that place-names change slowly.<sup>14</sup> That is, *fundi* names can reflect not merely the Trajanic or the Augustan systems, they may stretch back three centuries to the settlement of Liges Baebiani and even beyond. To state the matter simply, we are dealing with two sets of data, one showing a precise present of A.D. 101, the other a historic past of unknown and varying depth. That said, however, there is no reason to abandon the second, and much can be said about the relation between the two.

A third and a fourth problem we have encountered already, that is, the deep untrustworthiness of the text and the mutilation of its first column. Taking all four together, extreme caution is in order. Let us first deal in hypothesis. Let us assume, for the moment, that the two surviving columns of the table do represent a reasonably complete sketch of landowning at Liges Baebiani in 101. What of its history might we deduce from that sketch?

Inevitably, families rise and fall. Instances of upward mobility can be picked out from the table with the aid of external evidence, but proof of family collapse or decline can seldom be clear. Are there traces at Liges Baebiani of old proprietorial families which are no longer extant? Most of the nomina contained in the *fundi* are of no help, appearing only once, but where a name appears twice or more there may be some hint of past glory. Take for instance the Albii: four *fundi Albiani* are recorded (2, 24; 2, 30; 2, 66; 3, 37), held by four different owners in four different *pagi*, while no Albius actually appears as a landowner. Three of these *fundi* are attached to other parcels of land, and three of them belong to what are recognizably among the leading landowners of the district (ranked, in terms of land pledged, first, fifth, and ninth), in other words there are various indicators that a prominent gens of older times has passed away and its property has been dispersed. Similarly, three separate parcels of land recall the Caerellii, and two each families of Aurelii, Caesii, Curii, Decii, Flavii, and Satrii.<sup>15</sup> Particularly interesting are the last two cases. The *fundi Flaviani* are both in the same *pagus* (*Meflanus*), but they belong to different owners (2, 72; 2, 75: neighbours?): that suggests a larger single estate broken up among heirs or purchasers. The two *fundi Satriani* (2, 17; 2, 23) both belong to Cn. Marcius Rufinus. Each is probably in a different *pagus*: the first is attached to Rufinus' ancestral estate, the *fundus Marcianus*, the second lies with the *fundus Curianus*, which also may recall a vanished family; in other words the fortune of the Marcii seems to be built in part upon – perhaps inherited from – those of earlier families.

<sup>14</sup> But not alas as slowly as place-name studies advance. This essential tool is in its infancy in France and virtually non-existent in Italy; paradoxically, and thanks to the influence of mediaeval studies, the science is most advanced in the least Roman of provinces, Britain.

<sup>15</sup> References may be found in MOMMSEN's index to CIL IX 1455, at p. 129.

This method of proceeding is immediately open to attack: certain old families may simply not have subscribed to the scheme, others may be lost in the lacunae of column 1.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the hypothesis should be kept in mind, for other evidence may confirm it, as happens in the following exercise.

In several cases a nomen turns up both in the names of a *fundus* and in the name of an owner. While hardly excluding other owners from this same class, there is a good hint here that at least these proprietors are members of *gentes* which have held land for some time.

The most obvious evidence for this lies in the surprisingly small number of owners whose names are reflected in their own estates. For example, the first and most valuable of seven properties engaged by Marcius Rufinus is the *fundus Marcianus et Satrianus* (2, 17). Similarly, the third largest proprietor, Stenius Felix, pledges his *fundus S(t)enianus Valentinianus et Octavianus* (3, 77).<sup>17</sup> A Nonius Restitutus offers his *fundus Nonianus* (3, 70; he also held other land, cf. 2, 25). Vibbius Modestus, the eighth largest proprietor, registers his *fundus familiaris* (3, 53). And the Suellii Flaccus and Rufus are *adfines* to a *fundus Primigenianus et Albianus et Sutorianus et Suellianus* (2, 65–67).

Next, the following list adds to this handful every proprietor (owners and neighbours) whose gentilicium is to be found in the name of a property owned by someone else. (For line references, consult MOMMSEN's index to CIL IX 1455.) Let us assume that it very roughly represents the older families of the region, though the commoner gentilicia such as Iulius and Valerius may suggest some doubt.

1 Annius Rufus	<i>f. Albianus et Amarantianus Surianus Annianus</i>
2 P. Camurius Fortunatus	<i>f. Camurianus</i>
3 Clodius Conveniens	<i>f. Clodianus</i>
4 Iulia Hecate	<i>f. Iulianus</i>
C. Iulius Saturninus	<i>f. Iulianus maior minor medius</i>
5 Cn. Marcius Rufinus	<i>f. Marcianus et Satrianus</i>
Marcius Rufus	<i>f. Marcianus</i>
	<i>f. Aurelianus Marcianus</i>
	<i>f. Marcianus cum parietinis</i>
6 Nonius Restitutus	<i>f. Nonianus</i>
7 Octavius Lybicus	<i>f. Stenianus Valentinianus et Octavianus</i>
Octavius Martialis	
Octavius Modestus	
Octavius Proculus	
Octavia Venusta	

<sup>16</sup> A case in point at 1, 6: apparently *adf. Caesio* / ... However, the reading is by no means clear, and it could accommodate the familiar *Caes. n.*

<sup>17</sup> For the correction, see above. Annius Rufus, the second largest proprietor, may also have an estate bearing a family name, see further below.

8	Petronius Primigenianus	<i>f. Petronianus</i> (cf. <i>f. Primigenianus</i> )
9	Rubrius Primus	<i>f. Rubrianus</i>
10	Stenius Felix	<i>f. Stenianus Valentinianus et Octavianus</i>
11	Suellius Flaccus	<i>f. Primigenianus et Albianus et Sutorianus</i>
	Suellius Rufus	<i>et Suellianus</i>
12	C. Valerius Pietas	<i>f. Bassianus et Valerianus Caesianus Plinianus</i>
	Valerius Valerianus	<i>f. Valerianus</i>
		<i>f. Valerianus Vasclianus</i>
13	Vergilius Proculus	<i>f. Vergilianus</i>
14	L. Vibbius Anencletus	<i>f. Vibianus</i>
	Vibbius Modestus <sup>18</sup>	<i>f. familiaris</i>

To these examples a second category may be joined, comprised of families who, while not providing the name of a *fundus*, nevertheless appear in two or more branches, or at least representatives. That too may suggest a certain relative antiquity, even if only of one generation.

- 1 Caelius Flaccus  
Caelius Maximus
- 2 Ceius Venator  
Ceius Vestigator
- 3 Neratius Corellius  
Neratius Diadumenus  
Neratius Marcellus
- 4 Septicius Crescens  
Septicius Rufus
- 5 Statoria Prisca  
Statorius Pudens  
L. Statorius Restitutus
- 6 L. Tettius Etruscianus  
Tettius Etruscus<sup>19</sup>

It is thus possible, simply on the basis of estate names and number of representatives, to pick out some 20 (or 22: cf. notes 18 and 19) *gentes* from the 55 mentioned in the second and third columns as representing to some extent an older stratum in the land-owning elite at Ligures Baebiani (while by no means excluding other families, some of which are suggested by external evidence): Annii, (Antistii), Caelii, Ceii, Camurii, Clodii, Iulii, (Manlii), Marcii, Neratii, Nonii, Octavii, Petronii, Rubrii, Septicii, Statorii, Stenii, Suellii, Tettii, Valerii, Vergilii, Vibbii. Together they include some 22 (or

<sup>18</sup> To these could be added the neighbour ... anlia ... of 1, 4 and the *fundus Manlianus* of 3, 44.

<sup>19</sup> To these could be added Antius Gamus of 3, 35 and the Antistii Iustus and Priscus of 3, 62 (cf. above).

24) of the 48<sup>1/2</sup> surviving registrations, that is, very roughly half. To what extent is this identification of them valid?

Let us correlate this list with the wealth represented on the table. The following shows the top 20 landholders in estimated value of estates pledged.<sup>20</sup>

Marcus Rufinus	HS 501,000
Annius Rufus	451,000
Stenius Felix	200,000
1,5	172,000
Tettius Etruscianus	150,000
Ceus Vestigator	133,000
2,3	125,000
Vibbicus Modestus	122,000
Clodius Conveniens	109,000
Trebonius Primus	100,000
Res publica Baebianorum	100,000
Octavius Lybicus	100,000
Antius Gamus	100,000
Septicius Crescens	100,000
Octavius Martialis	92,000
1,34	86,000
Iulius Saturninus	80,000
Camurius Fortunatus	80,000
Caelius Flaccus	75,000
Ceus Venator	70,000

These landowners are roughly equivalent to the minority who pledged more than the average HS 77,254. Four of them must be subtracted, three being nameless, one public. The remaining 16 owners in this list represent 14 *gentes*: no fewer than 12 (or 13) of these 14 *gentes* appear among the 22 (or 24) *gentes* identified above as 'old' families.<sup>21</sup> Compare the *next* 20 owners in order of declared wealth (between HS 40,000 and 70,000): again subtracting 5 who are nameless, we are left with 15 owners representing 15 *gentes*, yet only *two* of these *gentes* appear among the 22 (or 24) 'old' families.<sup>22</sup> In short, there seems to be a correlation between wealth and presumed antiquity; in other words, land and money appear to be concentrated exactly where we would expect them to be, in the hands of the older landowning *gentes*.

If this conclusion is valid, one assumption about the history of property at Liges Baebiani must be radically revised. VEYNE concluded that from an unknown date all

<sup>20</sup> Based on DUNCAN-JONES 211–215. I omit praenomina. Figures stand for the column and line number of a lost name.

<sup>21</sup> And rank and wealth are independently attested for the fourteenth, Trebonius (CIL IX 1496. 1639. 4069), though chronology is unsure.

<sup>22</sup> Identifying ... Ferox (3, 1) with the neighbour Seppius Ferox (3, 47): cf. below.



property had changed hands, but his evidence is highly misleading. As noted above, only a handful of proprietors declared what were obviously ancestral estates, that is, *fundi* whose names were derived from their own gentilicia. Many have therefore assumed that most estates had changed owners, a conclusion which points to exceptionally rapid and widespread social mobility. However, a quite different conclusion now seems warranted: not that families had lost their ancestral acres, but simply that they tended not to *pledge* them to the imperial alimentary scheme. We must never forget that while the alimentary table of Ligures Baebiani doubtless offers a representative sketch of the local elite it need by no means reveal more than a fraction of each owner's holdings in the area. Indeed it is very difficult to imagine that any sane proprietor would pledge a significant part of his holdings to such a scheme at all. Cn. Marcius Rufinus, with his seven estates worth half a million, is by no means the exception in being so wealthy; he is exceptional only in pledging so much. The tendency suggested above is the standard one of land to accumulate in the hands of a few, the old families. Much property changes hands, but much – here invisible – remains in the same ownership, to form the nucleus of what may be called *latifundia*.

This touches on a broad question, the state of the Roman property market. It has been suggested that the Roman upper class (in Cicero's day at least) was feverishly engaged in property deals, and indeed there is much evidence to suggest a corresponding turnover.<sup>23</sup> Near the heart of the matter here is a question of sentiment: in general, it is argued for various reasons – fragmentation of properties, lack of interest in rural pursuits, distance from Rome, et al. – that the Roman gentleman's relationship with his land, particularly with his ancestral acres, was considerably less emotional than that of his English counterpart in a later age, and that one reason for this is that Rome allegedly suffered from a dearth of ancient families surviving in 'genetic and property continuity' over the generations. This proposed discontinuity is so dubious, and the question is so important, that discussion of it must be left for another occasion. It fails to take proper account, for instance, of Cicero's long and very emotional discussion of his family estate at Arpinum, or of his repeated efforts in the midst of the turmoil of 49 to bestow the *toga virilis* on his son at Arpinum; nor does it allow for Pliny's offer of any of his estates at Comum to the daughter of Corellius Rufus, whose memory he held sacrosanct, *exceptis maternis paternisque; his enim cedere ne Corelliae quidem possum*.<sup>24</sup> And the dispute here is not simply one of ancient values and intentions, for such a theory fails to account for observable fact, the tendency towards the aggregation of estates so striking to ancient writers, so brilliantly demonstrated on the ground by DE PACHTÈRE in his study of the Veleian tablet.<sup>25</sup> The accumulation and dissolution of estates are eternal and co-existent processes: to suggest one

<sup>23</sup> E. RAWSON, The Ciceronian Aristocracy and its Properties, in: M. FINLEY (ed.), *Studies in Roman Property*, 1974, 85–102.

<sup>24</sup> Cic. leg. 2, 1, 3–5; Att. 9, 6, 1; 9, 17, 1; 9, 19, 1. Plin. ep. 7, 11, 5; cf. 2, 15, 2: *Me praedia materna parum commode tractant, delectant tamen ut materna ...*

<sup>25</sup> DE PACHTÈRE 58–97.

without the other is to give a most distorted picture. And in the long run, it has been suggested, wealth in Rome tended throughout the history of the empire to be concentrated more and more in fewer and fewer hands.

Another principle has been enunciated which runs counter to the hectic-market theory: «The principal means of transfer of wealth appear to have been inheritance and, to a lesser extent, marriage.»<sup>26</sup> Along these lines, it was suggested above that wealth (that is, landed property) accumulated most noticeably in the hands of some of the older elite families, and that this phenomenon was in part obscured by the inclination not to pledge the ancestral estate where other, less valuable – valuable in terms either of money or of sentiment – lands were available. Here another element may be added. Perception of a lack of «genetic and property continuity», and specifically (at Ligures Baebiani) of a complete and relatively rapid turnover of land ownership in general, is seriously distorted by a narrowly agnatic view of descent. That the *fundus Seianus* is no longer held by a man named Seius is no guarantee that the present owner is not connected with the original proprietor Seius: marriage and descent through females were as important at Rome as in later societies; and adoption into or out of the family, particularly by a relative, is the fundamental artificial instrument for creating legal and emotional ties. The salient point at Ligures Baebiani is not that property has undergone great change of ownership, but that ownership has so often passed *within* the same group of families: that is, a Statorius, a Ceius and an Octavius each owns a *fundus Marcianus*, a Marcius owns a *fundus Iulianus*, a Iulia owns a *fundus Clodianus*, a Clodius owns a *fundus Clodianus*, and so forth. While there was doubtless some market in property, and while new families did inevitably rise (and, for that matter, unite with older ones), inheritance and marriage must be at least as important. That raises the important question of the relative homogeneity and the relative stability of the landed elite at Ligures Baebiani.

#### IV

There was, to be sure, great diversity within the elite at Ligures Baebiani: the 74 men and women whose names survive on the table – 44 owners + 24 *adfines* + 6 who appear as both – represent not much fewer than 55 *gentes*.<sup>27</sup> (By comparison, the famed album of Thamugadi in Numidia names some 263 male gentry divided among a mere 65 *gentes*.<sup>28</sup>) And of these 74, no fewer than 9 (or about 1 in 8) bear identifiably Greek cognomina. (At Thamugadi the figure is roughly 1 in 12.) Nevertheless

<sup>26</sup> DUNCAN-JONES, in: M. FINLEY (ed.), *Studies in Roman Property* 12.

<sup>27</sup> I assume here that Priscia = Crispia, and that the figure 74 includes the ... Ferox of 3, 1. The number may be reduced if (e.g.) Antius = Antistius, Livinius = Licinius, etc.

<sup>28</sup> A. CHASTAGNOL, *L'album municipal de Timgad*, 1978, 49–74. No comparable study of the Veleia tablet exists.

there are some indications that the landowners at Ligure Baebiani were as a social group relatively homogeneous.

There are of course strong hints of a web of marriage and interrelationship binding together a considerable part of the elite. It was suggested above that some 20 (or 22) *gentes* among the 55 represent at the least some historical core of the landowning class at Ligure Baebiani, and some 36 (or 39) of the 74 individuals, or roughly half. Moreover, another six people can be identified as holding estates which had formerly belonged to one or other of the leading *gentes* past or present: it is by no means certain that all of them bought their properties, that is, inheritance or marriage are just as likely sources, particularly when some of these individuals are known from other sources to be members of reputable families.<sup>29</sup> But these calculations are based only on one kind of evidence, the employment of gentilicia.

Equally important, and especially in its geographical deployment, may be the occurrence of the cognomen at Ligure Baebiani. At Thamugadi, 263 people shared some 158 cognomina; at Ligure Baebiani the figures are 74 and 49, that is, the ratio is roughly the same. But whereas at Thamugadi the names are very dispersed, with only 3 borne by more than 3 people, at Ligure Baebiani (with a much smaller group) 4 are borne by 4 people (Flaccus, Restitutus, Rufus, Secundus), 5 by 3 people (Ferox, Modestus, Primus, Proculus, Vitalis), and 4 by 2 people (Lupus, Marcellus, Pudens, Saturninus). To these one might add 3 pairs of cognates shared by 2 or more people, Etruscus/Etruscanus, Felix/Felicio, and Rufus/Rufinus (and perhaps add from column 1 another Pudens, another Secundus, and 2 Maximi). That is, of 74 persons some 39 share exactly the same cognomen with at least one other person, and some 6 more share cognomina cognate with one of the 39 or with one another. Even if they are all relatively common, this seems far too many for simple coincidence, particularly when other equally common names are passed over.<sup>30</sup> Hence two simple questions may be posed: where a cognomen is repeated, is there any other sign that its bearers were connected; and where the location (the *pagus*) is known, is there any significant grouping of cognomina?

To take an obvious example, the cognates Marcius Rufinus and Marcius Rufus are clearly related (they share the same gentilicium), and presumably father and son; what is more, Rufus is a landowner in the *pagus Meflanus* (2, 76), while at least one of Rufinus' larger estates lies in the same *pagus Meflanus* (2, 25): here then the cognomen has some clear significance. Unfortunately, name-linkage with gentilicia is a

<sup>29</sup> Viz., ... Ferox, *fundus Valerianus*; Bebbius Ferox, *fundus Valerianus*; Cosinius Cosmus, *f. Petronianus*; Naevius Vitalis, *f. Flavianus*; Trebius Ampliatus, *f. Caerellianus*; Valgia Secunda, *f. Curianus*.

<sup>30</sup> Of the 13 precisely repeated at least once on the table, 8 appear in a list of the 56 cognomina most common among legionary soldiers, each with at least 20 examples: L. R. DEAN, *A Study of the Cognomina of Soldiers in the Roman Legions*, 1916, 13 ff. But in 1916 DEAN was able to find only 12 Modesti, 10 Restituti, 8 Flacci, 5 Lupi (and cognates), and – most surprisingly – only 2 Feroces.

delicate business at best, but with cognomina it is infinitely more risky. The following remarks are therefore confined to a pair of possibly significant cases, less to test a hypothesis than to suggest a method. Names do tend to be repeated, and again not merely in the genetic male line but through females and through adoption, and there are moreover numerous examples in the polyonymous upper classes at Rome of gentilicia being suppressed while their cognomina attach to other names. It should follow then that when the same cognomina appear in significant contexts they may offer some clue to family connections and hence to social homogeneity.

A good indication of the possibilities lies in the name *Ferox*, which appears three times on the table: ... *Ferox* owns the *fundus Valerianus Vascianus cum parietinis, pago Martiale, adfine Rutilio Lupo* (3, 1); a *Seppius Ferox* appears as the neighbour of the *fundus Lucilianus, pago Martiale*, owned by the *Statorii Prisca* and *Pudens* (3, 46); and a *Bebbius Ferox* owns the *fundus Valerianus, pago Martiale, adfine Umbrio Primo* (3, 47). All three *Feroxes* are thus to be found in one *pagus*, and two of them, members of different *gentes* each own a *fundus Valerianus*: here then, for a start, we surely see what could easily have been hypothesized, an earlier marriage connection between landowning families which resulted in an estate being split between cousins.<sup>31</sup> To proceed cautiously, let us assume for the sake of economy that the owners ... *Ferox* and *Seppius Ferox* are one and the same person – ... *Ferox* cannot be *Bebbius Ferox*, since no owner appears twice as such on the table. We have then two *Feroxes*, owners of *fundi Valeriani* in the *pagus Martialis*, one a neighbour of *Statorius Pudens* and *Statoria Prisca* and of *Rutilius Lupus*, the other of *Umbrius Primus*, all of these people being more or less neighbours of each other. Now let us add the cognomen *Priscus*, which also occurs three times on the table: *Statoria Prisca* the owner we have already met, in the *pagus Martialis*; *Antistius Priscus* owns with *Antistius Iustus* the *fundus Lucceianus Gallianus, pago Martiale, adfine Umbrio Primo* (3, 62); and *Betulenius Priscus* owns the *fundus Senecianus, pago Martiale, adfine Rutilio Lupo* (3, 43). In brief, not only are all three *Prisci* to be found within the same single *pagus* as well, they either share boundaries with the *Feroxes* or share the same neighbours (*Rutilius Lupus* and *Umbrius Primus*), that is, we can begin to piece together a coherent geographical nucleus of landholders and to suspect that ties of blood bound many of them together as well, witness the repetition of the names *Ferox* and *Priscus* within one *pagus* and nowhere else.

Let us consider further two names from this nexus in the *pagus Martialis*. *Pudens* occurs twice on the table, once in the name of the owner *Statorius Pudens* of the *pagus Martialis* (as above), and once in *L. Turselius Pudens*, owner of the *fundus Caerellianus, pago Meflano, adfine Rubrio Primo* (3, 39). And the cognomen *Primus* is borne by three men: *Umbrius Primus*, cited twice as a neighbour in the *pagus Mar-*

<sup>31</sup> Most simply, the two *Feroxes* could be sons of two sisters *Valeriae*. The *Bebbi* at least should also be added to the list of older *gentes*, for the name presumably goes back to 180 B.C. and the Ligurian settlement by M. *Baebius Tamphilus*.

*tialis* (as above), was also *adfinis* of Naevius Vitalis, owner of the *fundus Aquilianus* in the *pagus Meflanus* (2, 78); a Trebonius Primus is owner of the *fundus Apuleianus et Cassianus et Arellianus*, *pago Meflano*, *adfine Marcio Rufino* (2, 62); and a Rubrius Primus is listed twice as neighbour in successive *obligationes* by Turselius Pudens (as above) of the *pagus Meflanus*, and by Safronius Secundus, owner of the *fundus Cispellianus* in a *pagus* whose name has dropped out but which was surely the *Meflanus* (3, 41). Thus, one of the Primi was part of the nucleus in the *pagus Martialis* described above, while all three of them were owners in one *pagus*, the *Meflanus*; one of the Pudentes was again part of the *Martialis* grouping, while the other was neighbour to one of the Primi in the *Meflanus*.<sup>32</sup> Again, they are all found in a relatively constricted area, together, and nowhere else.

Sketchy though the evidence may be, I would suggest that the geographical distribution and the concatenation of cognomina – here Ferox, Priscus, Pudens, and Primus (and perhaps Rufus as well, though the evidence is thin) – can further support a picture of unexpected cohesion within the landowning class at Ligures Baebiani, one based in part on ties of marriage and descent which we have already seen in terms of the ownership of estates.<sup>33</sup> Certainly, cognomina aside, there are several contemporaneous landowners in 101 who clearly stood in close kinship: the Neratii Marcellus and Corellius (father and son, on whom see below), Tettii Etruscus and Etruscianus, Marcii Rufus and Rufinus, Ceii Vestigator and Venator (surely brothers!), Antistii Iustus and Priscus, Statorii Prisca and Pudens, Suellii Flaccus and Rufus. Always we must remember just how selective and how defective our document is, but that merely renders all the more striking the connections that can be made. Many of the *pagi* are simply missing, some of the other owners on the table stand in utter isolation, unconnected through their own names or through the names of their estates or through their neighbours. Much evidence is simply lacking, but if the document were complete and accurate, and if it covered the entire private landownership of the area, I believe that it would conform to the picture sketched above. This is by no means to claim that the proprietorial class at Ligures Baebiani was frozen for eternity, nor that families *did not rise and fall*, simply that it was far more stable than at first appears.

What then about those most blatantly intrusive of elements, the nine landowners with Greek cognomina: P. Titius Aiax, L. Vibbius Anencletus, Cosinius Cosmus, L. Neratius Diadumenus, Antius Gamus, Iulia Hecate, Octavius Lybicus, Gavia Myrtale, and L. Longius Pyramus? To work from the known to the unknown, Neratius Diadumenus is certainly not a relative of the Neratii of Saepinum, and is presumably of freedman stock or indeed (as I shall suggest below) a freedman himself. Similarly Vibbius Anencletus, Iulia Hecate, and Octavius Lybicus all combine the respectable

<sup>32</sup> There is also another Pudens at 1, 13.

<sup>33</sup> I take the above samples to be representative. Less certain are the occurrences of the cognomen Flaccus: 3 of the 4 examples appear in the *pagus Salutaris*, 2 actually as neighbours and the third the Suellius Flaccus whom we have met before (2, 67; 3, 13–16). Moreover, 2 of the 3 Modesti appear to have lived in the *pagus Labicanus*: cf. above and 3, 53 ff.

gentilia of old landowning *gentes* with Greek cognomina: barring some odd fit of Hellenizing among the elite at Ligure Baebiani, they too are surely either freedmen themselves or the descendants of freedmen. Less certainly Antius Gamus and Titius Ajax. The name Antius does not appear in the indices of CIL IX, while Titius is amply attested there, but given the treacherous nature of the table I would put both of them out of court, since the wealthy Antius Gamus may (as I strongly suspect) conceal a cliental connection with the sternly respectable pair Antistius Iustus and Priscus, and «Titius» Ajax could mask a dependent of the Tettii Etrusci.<sup>34</sup> Finally, Cosinius Cosmus, Gavia Myrtale and Longius Pyramus. The *gentes* of the first two are attested in the area of Ligure Baebiani and Beneventum, including in the case of Cosinius both priests and landowners. Longius Pyramus is the odd man out, apparently a genuine outsider.<sup>35</sup>

The question to be asked is not whether these were freedmen or the descendants of freedmen, but rather *whose* freedmen were they? The evidence suggests that they were not outsiders. If they were then mainly dependants of local families who set out on their own, buy or are given land, prosper, and rise into the Augustal elite and (in later generations) into the local *curia*, then they themselves are tokens of social continuity. Here we should recall particularly Pliny's contemporary approval of the manumission of slaves: *Cupio enim patriam nostram omnibus quidem rebus augeri, maxime tamen civium numero: id enim oppidis firmissimum ornamentum* (ep. 7, 33, 1). At the least these people are the *gentiles* of the old families and in a sense their representatives, and we must always allow for the real possibility that some of them began their Roman careers as *heredes necessarii*, the legitimate inheritors not only of the family name but of its *sacra* and property as well. Seen in this light they would do nothing but confirm the sense of historical depth within the landowning class at Ligure Baebiani.

## V

One of the major problems posed by the very limited universe in the table of Ligure Baebiani lies in its social relationship with the outside world of Trajan's early years. The problem can be approached at two levels. First, there is the region, and here there has been some controversy over the social status of the contributors to the alimentary scheme: were they decurions – who, in terms of wealth and local prestige, were the most obvious group of potential supporters – or were decurions perhaps

<sup>34</sup> The Tettii Etrusci certainly had a senatorial connection in the consul of 83 (Tettius Iulianus, cf. below), in whose proximity note the mysterious consul suffect of A.D. 80, M. Tittius Frugi.

<sup>35</sup> Cosinius: CIL IX 1506, 1540. I exclude here other possible descendants of freedmen who have acquired respectable Latin cognomina, as they simply cannot be detected. There were probably in fact several, cf. P. GARNSEY, in: B. LEVICK (ed.), *The Ancient Historian and his Materials*, 1974, 167–180.

exempted, or were they even excluded?<sup>36</sup> There is no directly relevant external evidence, and the internal, that is essentially prosopographical, data are inconclusive. On the one hand, when the names of landowners on the table are compared with those of local decurions, priests, and landowners known from other inscriptions, the results are very disappointing, for only a small handful of homonyms can be turned up; and (a more general discouragement) most of the inscriptions thus surveyed are not closely dateable.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, however, the fact remains that a significant proportion of the gentilicia prominent on the table do recur in the upper classes at Liguës Baebiani and at Beneventum. Moreover, at least thirteen men on the table could declare lands worth 100,000 sesterces or more, a sum which elsewhere represented eligibility for the town council, and (as was suggested above) they seem to come from the older families of the area. Is it likely that such an obscure place as Liguës Baebiani could produce such a surplus of wealthy men that some of them were excluded from participation in the local *ordo*; or, by the same token, that it could support a large band of otherwise unattested senators and knights, too lofty for the *ordo*; or even that it could provoke a large-scale and unpatriotic scramble for exemption from local office? In short, if many of these men were not decurions it is very difficult to say just what else they might be.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the very dearth of external evidence makes discussion of their role in local society extremely difficult.

From information on the table we can however discover something more about the relations between Liguës Baebiani and Rome, that is between one small region of the empire and the centre of power. It is encouraging, for a start, that by one reckoning the emperor himself was easily the largest landowner in the neighbourhood, in that he is cited at least seven times as *adfinis* by proprietors in four or five *pagi*.<sup>39</sup> From this presence on the ground we might infer certain channels of communication between the region and Caesar's court, via the imperial household. Moreover, despite the absence of any marks of rank on the table, several men can be identified who were of more than local importance, that is, senators and knights in the imperial service, and (most importantly) they share as a group certain significant common characteristics. First they must be examined individually.

By far the most interesting in several respects is L. Neratius Marcellus. A Neratius Marcellus appears three times on the table as a neighbour, reported by C. Iulius

<sup>36</sup> VEYNE 205; P. GARNSEY, *Historia* 17, 1968, 375; R. P. DUNCAN-JONES, *PBSR* 32, 1964, 34, and: *The Economy of the Roman Empire*, 1974, 303.

<sup>37</sup> Homonyms in the area can be found for Annius Rufus (CIL IX 2220), Iulia Hecate (1476), Marcus Rufinus (1582, 1583), Safronius Secundus (see above), Trebonius Primus (1496).

<sup>38</sup> Moreover if, as has been suggested, decurions were excluded from participation because of possible unreliability or corruption, the participation by the Res Publica Baebianorum itself (3, 21) might have caused some anxiety.

<sup>39</sup> Next comes Marcus Rufinus, owner or neighbour in three or four *pagi*. A vilicus of Tiberius Caesar in A.D. 11 is attested at Liguës Baebiani (CIL IX 1456), as is a Procne Caesaris (1482).

Saturninus (2, 51), by L. Vibbius Anencletus in the *pagus Meflanus* (2, 72), and by Licinius Liberalis (3, 59). He also makes a fourth appearance as an agent (*n. Neratius Marcellus*) for the owner Neratius Corellius, reporting the *fundus Paccianus et casa Aureliana, adfine Iulio Saturnino*, value a mere 22,000 (2, 14–16). And, to complete the record, a third member of his *gens* appears as well, L. Neratius Diadumenus, owner of the *fundus Rubrianus in Beneventano, pago Ligustino* (2, 8–10).

L. Neratius Marcellus (*cos. suff.* 95) was one of the great men of the age, a friend and favourite of emperors from Vespasian, whose quaestor he was and who raised him to the patriciate, to Hadrian, who awarded him a second and ordinary consulship in 120.<sup>40</sup> Most relevantly to Ligure Baebiani, he belonged to a powerful baronial family of the neighbouring municipium, Saepinum, a family which can be traced there from the days of the late republic to the late empire, and he himself was brother of the great jurist Neratius Priscus and son (apparently by adoption) of one of Vespasian's early legates, M. Hirrius Fronto Neratius Pansa.<sup>41</sup> Now Neratius Marcellus was married to the daughter of another Flavian consular, Q. Corellius Rufus, the friend and mentor of Pliny, and that marriage produced the ordinary consul of 122, Corellius Pansa.<sup>42</sup> This has been deduced from two items, from the recurrence of the uncommon cognomen Pansa, and from a notice in Pliny's letters (3, 3, dated c. 101), wherein the writer recommends a tutor for the young son of his friend Corellia Hispulla (Rufus' daughter) and remarks on the fame of the boy's paternal grandfather, his father and his uncle: these last three are surely the Neratii Pansa, Marcellus and Priscus (all consulars), and of course the landholder Neratius Corellius, attested in the company of a Neratius Marcellus at Ligure Baebiani in 101, has been rightly cited as confirmation of the deduction.<sup>43</sup> Curiously though, the obvious conclusion which is

<sup>40</sup> ILS 1032 is the main source.

<sup>41</sup> Here and subsequently, where evidence of local origins is not cited, consult GARNSEY, *Historia* 17, 1968. The history of the Neratii in the years between Vespasian and Hadrian has recently undergone extensive revision. The standard modern account by R. SYME, *Hermes* 85, 1957, 480 (= *Roman Papers*, 1979, 337), must be supplemented by much new information from *AE* 1968, 145; *AE* 1969–70, 152, and an important new reading of ILS 1034: see now G. CAMODECA, *RAAN* 87, 1976, 18–38.

<sup>42</sup> Suggested by E. GROAG, *PIR*<sup>2</sup> C 1293, and elaborated by SYME, *o.c.*

<sup>43</sup> The matter is badly complicated by an inscription from the vicinity of nearby Nola naming a Varia Pansina, wife of a L. Corellius Celer Fisius Rufinus, patron of Nola, and daughter of L. Varius Ambibulus, *procurator Augusti*. It has never been published: a transcription appeared at *RAAN* 30, 1955, 200, and was slightly corrected by A. DEGRASSI, *Scritti vari di antichità* 1, 1962, 682 n. 2. From this H.-G. PFLAUM argued in a valuable article (*BCTH* 1963/64, 148 ff.) that Varia Pansina and her husband were the parents of Corellius Pansa (*cos.* 122), Pansina being the daughter of an otherwise unattested daughter of Neratius Pansa, and this idea has since been approved by SYME, *Roman Papers* 715. There are however some difficulties: W. ECK, *RE Suppl.* 14 (1974) 106, rightly doubts whether the father of an ordinary consul would be remembered only as *patronus coloniae*; CAMODECA, *art. cit.* 31 n. 4, was surprised that an inscription raised c. 130 and punctiliously noting the ladies' relatives would omit a *consul ordinarius*; and I would add that an interval of less than fifty years between the consulships of Neratius Pansa and his alleged



of some interest for Ligures Baebiani has not been drawn, that is, that this Neratius Corellius is none other than Corellius Pansa, the future consul of 122; at all events he can only be a son of Neratius Marcellus and Corellia.<sup>44</sup>

Corellius Pansa, coming of patrician and consular stock, might expect his consulship about or soon after his thirty-second year; he was therefore born somewhere around A.D. 90 or slightly earlier. That fits in well with Pliny (ep. 3,3), at which time Corellia's son has just passed from boyhood (*pueritia*) and is now ready to leave home for study with a *rhetor Latinus*. So, on a rough reckoning, at the date of the Ligures Baebiani table (101) Neratius Marcellus and Corellia had a son somewhere in the range of 10 to 15 years old, and his age will be precisely the reason for Neratius Marcellus acting for Neratius Corellius in the alimentary scheme. For reasons to be considered later, the great senator and landowner Neratius Marcellus did not himself contribute directly, but he expressed his support for the scheme through his young son's small estate. By the same token, Neratius Diadumenus with his estate valued at 34,000 should be a dependent of the family. The name certainly suggests servile origins, indeed it could bear a reference to the *coronae* won as *dona militaria* by Marcellus' father, M. Hirrius Fronto Neratius Pansa.<sup>45</sup>

Next, a Suellius Flaccus appears as a neighbour to Cn. Marcius Rufinus (2, 21), and again with a Suellius Rufus as a neighbour to the *fundus Primigenianus et Albanus et Sutorianus et Suellianus* owned by Clodius Conveniens (2, 65–68). An inscription from Ligures Baebiani itself supplies us with a praenomen in Cn. Suellius Cn. lib. Eros. We should then not hesitate to identify the landowner Flaccus of 101 with Cn. Suellius Flaccus, legate in Numidia in 87 and victor over the Nasamones; while Rufus recalls (perhaps is the same as) Cn. Suellius Rufus, proconsul of Crete in the second century.<sup>46</sup> Like the Neratii, the family is a local one, based in Beneventum where they too were already curial in rank under the late republic.

Next, there is a Tettius Etruscus, reported as a neighbour in the *pagus Herculanus* by Cn. Marcius Rufinus (2, 23), and a L. Tettius Etruscianus, the fifth largest participant in the scheme with his *fundus Albanus et Amarantianus Surianus Annianus* in the *pagus Saeculanus* (2, 30–33). Statius provides the key to their identity. In a poem addressed to the knight Claudius Etruscus no more than eight years before the foundation of the Baebian scheme, the poet consoles his friend on the death of his aged father, a freedman who had risen to direct the office of the *a rationibus*; and in the course of this consolation he refers as well to the old man's wife, Claudius Etruscus'

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great-grandson is uncomfortably brief. Varia Pansina and her husband should therefore be set aside, but the Nola inscription remains extremely valuable, hinting at a much more complex network among the families mentioned above, and deriving from a place not too far from Beneventum.

<sup>44</sup> It may be added that Pliny hints that the son of Corellia Hispulla was polyonymous (ep. 3, 3, 6): *quae nomina et quanta sustineat*.

<sup>45</sup> AE 1968, 145.

<sup>46</sup> IRT 854, ILAlg. I 3002, Dio 67, 4, 6; ICret. I, 203 nr. 49.

mother, as the sister of a consul who had defeated the Dacians and triumphed over them.<sup>47</sup> Inevitably this general has been identified with L. Tettius Iulianus (*cos. suff.* 83), a successful commander in the revolution of 69 and the subsequent conqueror of Decebalus at the battle of Tapae, and the appearance of a landowning Tettius Etruscus at Ligure Baebiani surely clinches the identification.<sup>48</sup> Depending on Iulianus' age – he was praetor in 70, but whether early or late in life is quite unknown – he could be the brother and uncle of Etruscus and Etruscianus respectively, possibly even father and grandfather. Perhaps senatorial then, certainly equestrian, the Tettii at any rate belonged to a powerful group at the court of Domitian.<sup>49</sup> Their place of origin is a problem. C. Tettius Africanus, prefect of Egypt and certainly a kinsman, shows Umbrian connections, but there are ties closer to Samnium: an aristocratic Laberia C.f. Tettia Prisca turns up at Capua (cf. C. Laberius Priscus, *cos.* 149?), and when the father of Claudius Etruscus was ordered into retirement – delicately, as *hospes*, not as *exul* – it was to the soft shores of Campania, the poet relates, and to «the citadels of Diomedes», the latter indicating precisely the area of Ligure Baebiani.<sup>50</sup>

A Rutilius Lupus is the man most often cited as *adfinis* on the table (after Caesar), twice in the *pagus Martialis* by Betulenus Priscus (3, 43) and Seppius? Ferox (3, 1), once in the *pagus Beneventanus* by Ceius Vestigator (3, 24), and once in an unknown *pagus* by «Antius» Gamus (3, 35). Moreover, the contribution of the seventh largest participant (1, 79–2, 4), whose name is lost, is estimated at 125,000 by a slave of Rutilius Lupus: *n. Callistus Rutili Lupi*. This raises a question. MOMMSEN classified the nine known «numerators» into four groups: 2 men were self-proclaimed sons of the *domini* (1, 54; 1, 69); 2 were clearly slaves of the *domini* (2, 71; 2, 74); 2 are called by MOMMSEN slaves of «other» *domini*, simply because the name of their master is cited (as with Callistus) and therefore is presumed to have differed from that of the owner for whom they were acting (1, 65; 2, 3: unfortunately in both cases the owner's name is missing); and 3 are simply «other», that is some person who was not the owner (1, 28; 1, 41; 2, 16), though now it appears that one of them, Neratius Marcellus, was in fact the owner's father. Thus in 5 cases the agent was certainly a slave or relative of the owner, while in 4 there is no information as to status nor is the name of the owner known, in other words there is no real reason to think that any agent was

<sup>47</sup> Silv. 3, 3, 111–118.

<sup>48</sup> Tapae: Dio 67, 10, 1. For Statius and the father of Claudius Etruscus: P. R. C. WEAVER, *Familia Caesaris*, 1972, 284–294.

<sup>49</sup> J. K. EVANS, *Historia* 27, 1978, 104–111. He also suggests the possibility of polyonymy, that is, that Iulianus and Etruscus were one and the same. A Tettius may appear on the new fragment of the so-called testament of Dasumius (A.D. 108): AE 1976, 77.

<sup>50</sup> CIL XI 5382; ILS 6307; Statius, silv. 3, 3, 162–164. *Diomedaeas arces*: Apulian Arpi is understood here, the best-known of Diomedes' Italian «foundations». But that is on the other side of the peninsula from the other place of exile, the *molles oras* of Campania. Surely Diomedes' twin foundations of *Beneventum et Equumtuticum* (Servius, Aen. 8, 9) are more attractive, and Beneventum and Aequum Tuticum are both adjacent to the borders of Ligure Baebiani. (Add that both of Tettius Iulianus' names are found in the elite at Ligure Baebiani.)

unconnected with the owner and some to think that they were slaves or relatives. On the face of it Callistus Rutili Lupi was reporting the estates of Rutilius Lupus himself. If that is so, he was the most important person actually to contribute to the alimentary scheme at Ligures Baebiani.

The family is again local, patently from Beneventum, where the Rutilii Lupi appear as decurions and a M. Rutilius Lupus raised a dedication to a friend.<sup>51</sup> There are two candidates for the gentleman at Ligures Baebiani. One is the senator M. Rutilius Lupus whose career is known as far as his praetorship and a legionary legateship, and who may be the M. Rutilius indirectly attested as a *pontifex* in the year 102.<sup>52</sup> The other is the very senior equestrian official M. Rutilius Lupus, prefect of the *annona* before 111 and prefect of Egypt 113–117, and probably the amply attested owner of *figlinae* between 110 and 123.<sup>53</sup> Sheer guesswork has identified the man at Ligures Baebiani with one or the other of these, for there are no other clues; socially there is little to choose between the two, with a future prefect of Egypt far outweighing a *vir praetorius* in simple terms of power.

Easily the largest landowner on the table is Cn. Marcius Rufinus, who registers seven *fundi* worth half a million sesterces (2, 17–29), who is mentioned twice by others as neighbour (2, 63; 3, 19), and whose holdings are spread over at least four different *pagi*. The existence of a Marcius Rufus named elsewhere as *adfinis*, and of three other *fundi Marciani* pledged by other owners, confirm the Marcii as one of the chief families of the area. The home is again Beneventum, where the family was curial, and where two inscriptions mention the Cn. Marcius Cn.f. Rustius Rufinus who is attested as prefect of the *vigiles* at Rome in 205/207.<sup>54</sup> This eminent descendant, the widespread holdings of the family, and lands actually pledged to a value of 501,000 offer fairly strong proof that Cn. Marcius Rufinus was in fact or in name an equestrian.

Second only to him, and pledging more than twice as much as their nearest rival, is Annii Rufus, whose *fundus Bassianus et Valerianus Caesianus Plinianus cum saltibus xxv* is valued at 451,000. Again, as for Marcius Rufinus, this property alone places Annii Rufus' wealth comfortably above the minimum census required of a Roman knight, and like Marcius Rufinus he is clearly a member of one of the older families of the area. But there is one significant difference between the two men. Marcius Rufinus pledges seven different and separated estates, one of which – the first mentioned and most valuable – looks like the ancestral estate. By contrast, Annii

<sup>51</sup> ILS 6500.

<sup>52</sup> ILS 3685; CIL VI 32445 + 31034. Other senatorial Rutilii Lupi: Digest. 50, 4, 6; RE I A, 1 (1914) 1263 s. v. Rutilius 22.

<sup>53</sup> *Praefectus annonae*: NSA 1953, 248. (H. PAVIS D'ESCURAC, La préfecture de l'annone, 1976, 336, dates his tenure to 107–112, on very thin evidence.)

<sup>54</sup> ILS 1343; CIL IX 1583 (Beneventum); the other evidence is gathered at PFLAUM, Carrières, nr. 234. He was not, as had long been thought, praetorian prefect: M. CEBELLAC-GERVASONI and F. ZEVI, MEFR 88, 1976, 620–637.

Rufus registers a true *latifundium*, a single estate with 25 *saltus* worth more than a knight's census. It is most improbable that anyone would be so patriotic or so foolhardy as to engage his entire patrimony to a public alimentary scheme; on the contrary, it is likely that we are dealing here again with a man of considerable wealth and therefore importance. There is a curial family of Annii Rufi over at Canusium, one of whom (the granddaughter of an Annii Rufus) married a man consul around the year 151.<sup>55</sup> But Canusium is rather distant and its Annii are rather dim. The table itself might afford a clue, if we can take (here and elsewhere) the names of the *fundi* to reflect the names of former owners. The first part of Annii Rufus' *latifundium* was the *fundus Bassianus*: there is in the previous generation a somewhat mysterious senator, a *gravissimus civis* according to the younger Pliny, L. Annii Bassus, a partisan of Vespasian, consul c. 71, and possibly legate of Dalmatia. Moreover, a senatorial Annian family prominent under the Julio-Claudians had interests in the area of Beneventum.<sup>56</sup> A connection with these would provide a suitably exalted background for a man of Annii Rufus' wealth.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, an Umbrius Primus is cited as neighbour three times in two *pagi* (2, 78; 3, 48; 3, 63). The *gens* is yet again amply attested as curial at Beneventum, and a near descendant, M. Umbrius Primus, was consul under Commodus, probably proconsul under Severus, and ancestor by blood or adoption of a long line of Roman consuls.<sup>58</sup>

In sum, seven owners at Ligures Baebiani can be identified with more or less confidence, and on various criteria, as equestrian in rank. Of these three were certainly, and one or two more were possibly, senators or of senatorial family. Together they form a remarkably homogeneous group.

Samnium and the people of Samnium had suffered terribly from Sulla's revenge, and in the days of Augustus Strabo painted a gloomy picture of a society in ruins (6, 1, 2). This accords with the curious fact that even after the lapse of considerable time, even under the early empire, a Samnite senator was a rarity.<sup>59</sup> The table of Ligures Baebiani signals a revival of glory with a significant handful of senators

<sup>55</sup> CIL IX 330; see further GARNSEY, O.C., and above.

<sup>56</sup> It was at Beneventum that Annii Vinicianus, Corbulo's son-in-law and the scion of a consular house, was alleged to have formed a conspiracy against Nero: Sueton. Nero 36, 1. Annii Bassus: PIR<sup>2</sup> A 637, with R. SYME, *Danubian Papers*, 1971, 179.

<sup>57</sup> The matching of *fundi* names with owners' gentilicia might prove profitable, as in Bassus and Annii. E.g., Helvius Modestus, owner of the *fundus Geminianus Tebanus* (3, 56), could recall the remarkably obscure senator adlected by Claudius into the patriciate, M. Helvius Geminus (ILS 5975); et al.

<sup>58</sup> Beneventan decurions: GARNSEY, O.C. (above, n. 41), plus the two reported at RAL 31, 1976, 103. Descendants: RE s.v. Nummii (with stemma), and T.D. BARNES, JRS 65, 1975, 43. Commodan consul: CIL XIV 7969 + Digest. 33, 7, 12, 40 with the statement of E. BIRLEY, JRS 52, 1962, 222. There is no good reason to identify this man with the ... M.f. Gal. Primus at Compsa (IX 973), despite the occurrence of the nomen Umbrius at that place (980).

<sup>59</sup> E. T. SALMON, *Samnium and the Samnites*, 1967, 390ff., provides a good summary of the decline. Cf. the sparse evidence collected by T.P. WISEMAN, *New Men in the Roman Senate*, 1970.

resident in one small corner of Samnium. What is more, it suggests something about the chronology: these families arrived with the Flavians. Most remarkably, the first senatorial Neratius, the first Tettius, the first Suellius, each had been a successful general in the 70's or the 80's; indeed, Neratius Pansa and Tettius Iulianus (and for that matter Annii Bassus) were legionary legates who espoused the cause of Vespasian in 69 and were suitably rewarded. This is not to suggest that the Flavian revolution of 69/70 created a new class out of nothing, merely that it accelerated a slow evolution. Some of the seven *gentes* considered above were assuredly equestrian or even senatorial in rank under the Julio-Claudians, but none of them is known to history. The Flavians brought them forward.

Perhaps the most important common factor among this new group in the imperial elite is that they all seem to have roots in the area, that is, they were not isolated members of an alien aristocracy who have invested in Samnite land. Whether of Samnite or of other Italian stock or (much the most likely) of mixed blood, they were natives. The Neratii are from Saepinum, the Suellii, Rutilii, Marci, and Umbri were all in origin curial families of Beneventum, the Annii came originally perhaps from Telesia, and the Tettii had connections (at least) in the area. Unlike Veleia in the North, Ligures Baebiani was rich enough to support more than one senator, and unlike Veleia it appears that she did not in part fall into the hands of outsiders of dubious origins. In five or six years Trajan would force the investment of at least one third of each senatorial fortune in Italian land, thus causing prices to rise sharply.<sup>60</sup> Already identifiable colonies of Narbonensians and Spaniards, of Africans and Asians had grown up in Italy, but they were confined to certain fashionable or convenient areas of Latium, Etruria and Campania.<sup>61</sup> Few if any of these provincial magnates, and just as few lowborn parvenus, would penetrate into the hills and valleys of Samnium.

The nature of local ties is of great importance in confronting the central problem of patronage, particularly as the elite of a region is the vital link between the local world and the centre of power. How and how well it functioned as such is the central question. At first glance the table of Ligures Baebiani with its clipped censal form may seem to have little to offer when set beside some of the more elaborate surviving decrees which commemorate in florid detail the manifold services of a local benefactor and his family, yet it is easy to forget that the document itself is not a formal archive but a public monument to patronage, recording in some detail the extent to which several members of the surrounding squirearchy had come to the aid of the municipality and its less fortunate children. And it must be emphasized that most of these gentry won both local prestige and the gratitude of their *optimus princeps* in return for what was after all a very small annual subscription.

<sup>60</sup> Plin. ep. 6, 19. On the question of senatorial domicile in Italy: A. CHASTAGNOL, *Mélanges offerts à Léopold S. Senghor*, 1977, 43.

<sup>61</sup> E.g., R. SYME, Tacitus, 1958, 602 n. 5, on Tibur; or ILS 5771 on Ferentum.

With that in mind we should turn to one of the more puzzling aspects of the table: there seems to be an easily discernible correlation between status and *non*-participation in the scheme. The table names some 30 *adfines* (31 counting the two Suellii, and excluding public entities), of whom 6 (including the two Restitutae, Priscia and Crispia, as one) appear also as owners and participants in the scheme. Of the remaining 24 non-participants – some of whose names may well be lost as the names of owners in the first column – 7 are mentioned as neighbours more than once, that is, on a very crude reckoning, these seven may be larger landholders than the other seventeen. This suspicion tends to be confirmed by the neighbour most often cited, *Caesar noster*, seven times. Then come the *privati* Rutilius Lupus (4 times), Neratius Marcellus (3), Umbrius Primus (3), Caelius Maximus (2), Rubrius Primus (2), and Suellius Flaccus (2); four of whom are at least recognizably equestrian in rank, that is from the top stratum of the regional elite.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, two other men who were of comparable rank, Marcius Rufus and Tettius Etruscus, appear on the table once each and only as neighbours; if they were indeed the fathers respectively of Rufinus (the largest contributor) and of Etruscianus (the fifth largest), then it could be assumed that they too were proprietors on a considerable scale.

It is somewhat disquieting that such natural patrons as these, senators and knights and therefore by definition proprietors on a large scale, should have held aloof from the local welfare scheme, but we should not draw conclusions from the silence of the table without considering the alternatives. Such men were imperial figures with much broader interests than their neighbours. Senators and the more active knights might well be participating in alimenta elsewhere. Or, as the relatively more wealthy, they might well exercise patronage in other ways, particularly in private alimentary schemes, whereas the moderately wealthy landowner would look to a more modest and more secure common outlet. Here, moreover, there is the highly important corollary that, while the biggest men in the district may not have participated personally, they did support the scheme: witness in particular the involvement of a dependant and of the adolescent son of Neratius Marcellus himself, and (one can argue) the involvement of sons of Tettius Etruscus and Marcius Rufus. These were all men with roots in the area, and it is a welcome sign that, no matter how exalted, some at least of the great men in the region of Ligures Baebiani took an interest in local affairs.

## VI

Ligures Baebiani is to us a small town without politics, without religion, without an economy, in short without history. Nothing ever happened there, and it was of pass-

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<sup>62</sup> Number of citations as *adfinis* as a crude index to extent of estates: observe the six people mentioned as both owners and neighbours. Those named only once as neighbours pledge land themselves worth 80, 50, 50, and 50 thousand, while those mentioned twice pledge 501 and 122.

ing interest only to such ancient authors as cared to write on matters of geography or surveying. If the alimentary table had never been unearthed, the town's exceedingly meagre harvest of inscriptions would yield little of interest on any subject: a couple of members of the *familia Caesaris* might hint at an imperial estate in the vicinity, a patron can be found to undertake the time-honoured task of restoring decayed baths, one or two families seem to be accorded a modest prominence. It is exceptionally difficult to trace the history of any society large or small with such intractable evidence. All the more reason then to value the rare document such as the alimentary table of Ligure Baebiani, and to interrogate it all the more closely. In answer to the questions posed at the outset, I have sketched the picture of a rural society headed by an inherently stable elite, one in which old families maintained their wealth and their position, one which was surprisingly cohesive in its composition, and one whose upper stratum gloried in a number of energetic and successful aristocrats of local birth whose power and influence stretched far beyond the confines of Samnium. The picture may be false or misleading but, if it is, the only way of modifying it lies in further close study of the table and of other important records of rural history, with the proper questions in mind. And if the picture is in any way true, it casts some interesting light on the problems of Italy and her agriculture, which were – or so we are often told – at this time in decline.