The impact of the populace on government of the city of Rome in the fourth century A.D

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Abstract of

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The purpose of this study is to show how popular rioting and fear of popular rioting and unrest came to be such a major concern of the Prefect of the City and his subordinates during the fourth century, a period when Emperors no longer lived at Rome (and so did not have to fear for their personal safety, when Plebeians were rioting in Rome), and in the early years of which the Praetorian Guard, the only force in Rome capable of crushing popular riots by brute force, was disbanded.

The first chapter deals with the status of Rome in the fourth century. It was no longer the political centre of the Empire, but it seems to have been the centre of patriotic feeling more than ever before, which is perhaps why Emperors were less harsh to the plebeians when they rioted than to provincials, and is why they took pains to help the Prefect of the City in dealing with plebeian grievances.

Chapter 2 deals with the discomforts of living in Rome, and subsisting there on the one hand, and the compensations, the bread and circuses, on the other.

The third chapter deals with the causes of disturbances at Rome, and how typical of the metropolises of the Empire (Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage and Constantinople) were the causes of riots, and their level of violence. Fourth century Rome is also compared to Rome in the Severan period to see how much or little it had changed.

Chapter 4 concerns the short term solutions to disturbances, that is the immediate options available to and adopted by the authorities once the disturbance had started.

Chapter 5 deals with the laws passed by Emperors to ensure that the people got their bread and circuses, and with other areas in which Emperors concerned themselves, such as the provision of a rudimentary health service.

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Abbreviations

A.M.	Ammianus Marcellinus (when the context is obvious even 'A.M.' is often omitted)
Bull.Arch.Comm.	Bulletino della Commisione Archeologica communale di Roma
C.A. or Coll.Avell.	Collectio Avellana
Carcopino	J. Carcopino Daily Life in Ancient Rome (1941)
C.I.L.	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
VI.Cons.Hon (or Cons.Hon.VI	Claudian On the Sixth Consulship of Honorius
Cons.Stil.	Claudian On the Consulship of Stilicho
'Corn Supply...'	G. Rickman The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome (1981)
C.Th.	Codex Theodosianus - The Theodosian Code
'Les Distributions..'	D. Van Berchem Les distributions de ble et d'argent a la Plebe Romaine sous l'Empire (1939)
E.T.M.	Expositio Totius Mundi
'Fastes...'	A. Chastagnol Les Fastes de le Prefecture Urbaine a Rome sous le Bas Empire (1962)
H.A.	Historia Augusta - The Augustan History
H.E.	Eusebius Ecclesiastical History
Hist.Arian ad Mon.	Athanasius' History of the Arian Heresy addressed to the Monks
I.L.C.V.	Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres
Jerome Ep.	Jerome Epistles
Libanius Or.	Libanius Orations
'Life and Leisure'	J.P.V.D. Balsdon Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome (1969)
L.R.E.	A.H.M. Jones Later Roman Empire (1964)
M.A.I.	Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres

J. Matthews 'Western Aristocracies'- Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court (1975)

M.G.H.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
P.U.	Praefectus Urbi (The Prefect of the City)
P.U.R.B.E.	A. Chastagnol La Prefecture Urbaine a Rome sous le Bas-Empire (1960)
'Rome Imperiale...'	L. Homo Rome Imperiale et L'Urbanisme dans L'Antiquite (1942)
Socrates H.E.	Socrates' Ecclesiastical History
Symm. Ep.	Symmachus Epistles
Symm. Rel. (or Rel.)	Symmachus Relationes
T.A.Ph.A.	Transactions of the American Philological Association

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

1) Introduction and Sources

> "And as I think it likely that some who live overseas and happen to read this (if anyone will) may wonder why, whenever my narrative turns to what was happening at Rome, he hears of nothing but public disturbances, bars and other mean things of a similar nature, I will briefly and concisely touch on the causes, nowhere diverging from the truth deliberately."
>
> Ammianus Marcellinus [1]
> XIV. 6.2.

> "Thus, having bowed the proud necks of the savage races, and laid down the laws, the eternal foundations and mooring ropes of liberty, the venerable city, like a wise, wealthy, and frugal parent, has given her patrimonial rights to the care of the Caesars as if to her children. And although the tribal assembly is inactive, the centuriate assembly pacified, and electoral rivalries gone now, and in their place the peace of Numa's reign is restored, yet she is accepted as mistress and queen in all the lands and on all shores, and in all places the white hairs and authority of the senators are revered, the name of the Roman People respected and honoured."
>
> [2]
> Ammianus Marcellinus
> XIV. 6. 5-6.

These two passages by Ammianus Marcellinus (a Greek from Antioch who settled in Rome after a military career and who considered himself so much a Roman that he wrote his history in Latin taking up where Tacitus left off) illustrate the attitude to the city of Rome and its inhabitants held by members of the upper classes. This thesis is intended to study the public disturbances mentioned in the first passage and how they affected the responses of those responsible for law and order among the seven hills. The second passage is important in showing one of the factors that shaped those responses to public disturbances.

The two passages indicate that one person might hold two different views of the city and its people and it would seem worthwhile therefore to consider the reliability of Ammianus and other primary sources for the fourth century A.D. that cover events in Rome.

Ammianus Marcellinus served in the Roman Army as a 'Protector',

a sort of officer cadet attached to the staff of a general or of the Emperor himself (in Ammianus' case it was a leading general called Ursicinus). 'Protectors' came from two areas. On the one hand there were the non-commissioned officers who had risen from the ranks, and on the other there were those people who had bought themselves into the Army at that level; Ammianus would have been one of the latter. Retiring from the Army at this rank Ammianus would have been of fairly high rank in Imperial society, and he would have had contacts at Court. However, in the fourth century the Imperial court and senatorial society were not very close (although of course high imperial officials would tend to achieve senatorial rank) and it is not certain that Ammianus had close connections with leading senatorial circles when he settled at Rome. This could be important in gauging whether the two satirical passages attacking the rich and poor of Rome alike (Book XIV chapter 6, and Book XXVIII chapter 4) are serious or not.

There is a letter of Libanius to a Marcellinus[3] which mentions that Marcellinus' history is being well received at Rome, but even if this is Ammianus, which is probable as both he and Libanius were Antiochenes, this does not necessarily mean that Ammianus was mixing in senatorial circles, since Libanius was a born Hellenist who disapproved of Greeks learning Latin for self-advancement, and whose friends were for the most part Easterners, not leading Romans. Although the satirical passages could suggest someone, frustrated at trying to enter high society and failing, venting his malice, there are indications even in the satire that Ammianus is not entirely serious. At one point he claims that the Roman aristocrat keeps his library locked (a ludicrous charge to make against the literary circle of Symmachus) and reads nothing but Juvenal (the satirist) and Marius Maximus(a writer of scurrilous biographies in the early third century).[4] If the Roman nobles enjoyed satire and scandal, using satire as a weapon would have been a poor weapon to attack them with, and so it seems unlikely that Ammianus was bitter in his satire, but was fondly mocking them rather for

their entertainment. If he is not bitter in his attack on the nobles, then it is unlikely that his attack on the plebeians is any more serious; his picture of them should be taken with a pinch of salt.

The two passages at the beginning of this chapter illustrate Ammianus' dilemma and the chief reason for that dilemma. His dilemma was that although he wanted to write a history centred on Rome, the city was no longer the political heart of the Empire, since the capital was wherever the Emperor was. Consequently he complains of the lack of anything worthy to report in the affairs of the city in the first passage. The second passage shows why he wanted to follow Roman literary tradition by centring his history on Rome: he was probably more Roman than the Romans themselves.

Given that he had to turn his attention to Rome, he tended to report popular disturbances and other things to the detriment of the plebeians' reputation not necessarily because he wished ill of them but rather because, following tradition (and also as a modern newspaper tends to print bad news because good news is usually less interesting), he wished only to record things of moment. As a secular historian of the ancient world he does not set out to highlight social changes such as the growth of Christianity among the people of the city but only events. Therefore when the plebs is behaving itself, which is presumably the norm, there is nothing to report except when an Emperor visits the city or some political crisis chooses to focus itself on Rome - for example the revolt of Nepotianus (an event prior to the surviving books of Ammianus). The Senate and People had both lost their influence on affairs by the fourth century A.D. The Senate as a body could not do much to influence an absent Emperor and its last act of independence had been the overthrow of Maximinus Thrax in 238, but its members still had a great deal of influence and were capable of resisting the Emperor's will and bringing on his anger.[5]

The people of Rome had lost their voting rights under Tiberius,

but continued to have an influence through public disturbances and through their acclamations in the circus and theatres; thus because the Senate was powerless and the Plebeians made themselves felt through public disturbances Ammianus had little else to report but 'seditiones', and their frequency as a subject for his Roman digressions should not be taken as evidence that rioting was a constant occupation of the people of Rome.

The narrative of Ammianus tends to emphasize the negative aspects of the plebeians, but what Ammianus may consider to be their good qualities are not manifest in the narrative, and need to be emphasized by him to be noticed. What suggests this is Ammianus' treatment of Constantius II in his obituary of that Emperor. His narrative has been constantly showing Constantius' bad traits, most notably his extreme suspicion of everyone and the ready ear he had for flatterers, but in his obituary Ammianus finds good points in Constantius' character, such as his chastity, that do not belong in the narrative of a serious historian, but would fit well into an imperial biography. In fact, in his description of Constantius' visit to Rome he praises the way that the plebeians were neither insolent nor forgetful of their old freedom.[6] Assuming then that Ammianus reports all popular disturbances (with one or two exceptions, which I shall return to in a moment) and that he has left none out during the quarter of a century the surviving books of his history cover (A.D. 353-378), his assertion that the people are constantly rioting being exaggerated, his history can be used to measure the frequency of riots in the fourth century in the city of Rome. There are one or two exceptions to this assumption. He does not record the prefectures of the last five years his history covers with the exception of the Prefecture of the City of Claudius, when a flood struck the city in 374. Nor does he fully cover the sequence of riots between Christian factions. He seems rather contemptuous of the Christians of Rome.[7]

Of course Ammianus is not the only source of information on the populace of Rome in the fourth century, and matters pertaining to them, e.g. the corn supply. The letters of Symmachus are another important primary

source for the period, although the ordinary epistles in Books I to IX are less informative than one might have expected of the correspondence of a leading Roman Senator. The letters are formal, and tend to allude to events rather than directly mention them, and they usually avoid the controversial issues of the day, such as religion. John Matthews has suggested that most of these letters were designed to develop and maintain Symmachus' 'amicitia' with the politically and socially influential people of his day, be they Roman or Barbarian (e.g. Stilicho), Pagan or Christian (e.g. Rufinus, or Ambrose), and that the material modern historians would like to find in them was considered too trivial, or too personal, to put in such letters, being either contained in a 'breviarium' or 'indiculum' accompanying the letter, or passed on by word of mouth by the bearer of the letter,[8] instead.

However, these letters do occasionally drop some information, such as news that a tenement block near the Forum of Trajan has collapsed, causing a riot[9], in which the 'vehiculum publicum' (? the Prefect's carriage) was so severely damaged that it had to be sold for use as a private vehicle. Sometimes Symmachus expresses concern about the possibility of a famine; the value of such statements, apart from showing senatorial concern, depends to some extent on the dating of the relevant letters, but O. Seeck's[10] dating seems on the whole to be well reasoned[11], and so such expressions of concern can be used as evidence for famines in or about the years they were written.

Book X of the letters is mainly composed of the 'Relationes', the letters that Symmachus wrote to the Emperor in 384 in his official capacity as Praefectus Urbi. They are much more informative than the other letters for that reason. They illustrate the problems a Prefect of the City sometimes faced: for example the failure of the African corn to arrive that year[12], or the misdeeds of 'Palatini' (imperial officials) trying to prevent one of their own kind being brought to justice by seizing a witness who was being escorted by 'Officiales' of the Prefect[13]. One also finds more regular duties, such as reporting of 'Acclamationes' of the people[14], or thanking the Emperor for providing Games, or Corn, on behalf of the Senate and People[15], or passing

on particularly difficult legal cases for the Emperor to decide upon[16].

The 'Relationes' are authentic documents as opposed to a work of literature and are useful in the detail they provide, and in showing that such and such a problem arose, and that the Prefect of the City had such and such a duty to perform, but one also has to be careful. In Relatio 3, to take one instance, it is in Symmachus' interests to paint as gloomy a picture of the famine in Africa as he could, though it may well have been that bad, in order to show that the removal of the Altar of Victory from the Senate-House and the adoption of Christianity in general has resulted in the withdrawal of the 'pax deorum'. Also, in Relatio 9, where he thanks Theodosius for the provision of Games at imperial expense, it is hardly likely that Symmachus would do other than emphasise the delight of the people at them; although, given the description of the Plebs in Ammianus as fanatical followers of chariot racing, their delight seems highly likely. If the people had not flooded out of the city to greet the arrival of the performers and the equipment for the Games, Symmachus would merely have said they were delighted, but given no concrete evidence of their delight. One must also be cautious with Relatio 10: Symmachus mentions the great grief of the city at the death of Praetextatus, but Jerome shows that at least one man did not share this grief at the death of a prominent pagan noble, even if everyone was shocked by the news.[17]

Another important source for fourth century Rome is the Theodosian Code, a law code containing most of the rescripts of legitimate Emperors from the Battle of the Milvian Bridge to the mid-fifth century, when it was published in 446. It shows what most concerned Emperors both during the period and at the time of compilation. It is reasonable to suppose that the number of laws on a particular subject (such as the requirement for sons of bakers to take up their fathers' profession) increased as the effectiveness of those laws decreased, and that the Code is a reflection of what Emperors wanted to happen rather

than of what the situation actually was.

Lack of laws on a particular subject meant either the law was a success, or that the Emperors would not take the matter further (because it was too insignificant or too controversial) or that by the time the Theodosian Code was published the subject was no longer a problem. Read with the caveats above the code is a useful guide to what problems most concerned the Emperors, and how the Late Empire was supposed to work in theory, if not always in practice.

The Byzantine historian Zosimus, who during the latter part of the fifth century wrote a history of the Empire from the late third century to the sack of Rome in 410, only concerns himself with the city in connection with the major events that happened there, such as the revolts of Maxentius and later of Julius Nepotianus, and Constantine's visit to the city for his "Vicennalia".[18] Unfortunately he is uncritical of his source for the fourth century, Eunapius, a militant pagan, and follows him in distorting the events of Constantine's "Vicennalia" to suggest that Constantine only became a Christian to escape the guilt of having had his wife, Fausta, and son, Crispus, executed.[19]

He makes little comment on the plebeians of Rome as a class, although he includes them among those generally hostile to Constantine after the events of the "Vicennalia", and mentions that some of the plebeians were armed to resist the forces of Nepotianus (mainly brigands and vagrants according to Zosimus) approaching Rome. However, his account of this event is not corroborated by Aurelius Victor who was pursuing a senatorial career at the time of the revolt and who wrote a summarised history of Rome in his later years. While more likely to be reliable than Zosimus on events in the fourth century, Victor's history is not sufficiently detailed to be a major source of information on the behaviour of the 'plebs Romana' during the period.

Imperial Panegyrics can be a source of information, although they have to be used with great care. They do after all reflect govern-

ment propaganda, with a tendency to stress the Emperor's good, or great, deeds, ignore his weaknesses, and exaggerate the evil deeds of any usurper he may have vanquished. Nonetheless a distinction can be made between events that happened, and fabrications, in some cases. Thus in the Panegyric of Constantine delivered in 313[20], Maxentius is accused of letting the plebeians starve to death (presumably referring to the revolt of Domitius Alexander in Africa, which resulted in the cutting of Rome's corn supply), and this, as a public event which could not have escaped people's notice, can be presumed to have a basis in fact, even if it is unjust to put the responsibility on Maxentius. 'There was a famine' is the unvarnished truth that can be deduced from the panegyric, but the propaganda element is to be found in the suggestion that Maxentius did not care about the plebeians in their affliction. What Maxentius was thinking at the time of the famine is something that neither we nor the panegyrist can really know. The evidence that the panegyrist uses is Maxentius' failure to react immediately to the famine, but that evidence is ambiguous, because his failure to act immediately may have been dictated (and indeed was) by external events, and that Emperor's own position (that without Africa Maxentius did not have the corn needed to feed Rome, and that raising an army and a fleet to retake Africa, which he was later able to do, would take time). Thus a distinction exists between the private motives imputed to a usurper by a panegyrist and any public deeds or misdeeds that a panegyrist can dredge up to his discredit. The latter may have a basis in fact, and can be used as evidence for events, whereas the former are flimsy propaganda. Private vices attributed to a usurper by a panegyrist of his conqueror, of the sort that the Constantinian panegyrist heaps on Maxentius in a later part of the same speech[21], are probably non-existent, and tended to be the same as those attributed to any tyrant; but anything that a usurper was likely to have done in the spotlight of publicity, is likely to be accurate, because the audience (the Imperial court) would have heard about it, and would resent false

accusations of public misdeeds done by a usurper, as an insult to their intelligence, and because it would compel them to stop pretending that the panegyric was telling the truth, and to admit that they had been accepting propaganda rather than the truth.

Panegyrics also have another use. The propaganda itself can show what those who were listening to, or reading, the panegyric considered to be virtues in their monarch, and what they expected of him. For instance a panegyric of Theodosius, of 389,[22] praises this absolute monarch for visiting the homes of senators in the manner of a 'Princeps' during his visit to Rome in 389, and moving around the city 'civilique progressu', allegedly without a military escort. The poet Claudian, a propagandist if ever there was one, refers back to the same visit:

> "...when, following a better precedent he behaved as a citizen, putting aside his aura of power, he traded jests with the people and put up with mild insults, and deigned to visit the homes of patricians, honouring private threshholds and ignoring imperial protocol."
>
> Claudian, Cons.Hon. VI [23]

From these two passages, together with what Ammianus Marcellinus says in approval of Constantius II's aloofness normally, and his less aloof behaviour in Rome, one can deduce that a special relationship existed between Emperors and the Senate and People of Rome[24]. More was expected of the Emperor in Rome and this is useful in interpreting other acts of Emperors affecting Rome during that period.

St. Jerome, Prudentius, and Paulinus of Nola say little about the plebeians of Rome, but where they do mention them they tend to regard them as Christians, and exemplary Christians at that; exemplary in contrast to hypocritical upper-class Christians[25], including some of the clergy; Christian in contrast to their pagan masters[26]. Whether this attitude to the people was completely heartfelt (these writers being mainly from western aristocratic families) is impossible to say, but, if it was not, they nonetheless paid lip-service to a different view from their

pagan contemporaries in suggesting that the poor were more admirable than the rich. They each hold contradictory views of Rome. Jerome, for example, wrote a satirical attack on the clergy and richer members of the laity of the church in Rome, but a quarter of a century after his lack of tact had lost him the papal election of 384 and caused his expulsion from the city, he was still distressed to hear that the city of Rome was in danger of barbarian attack[27]. Prudentius, while deploring the paganism of its leading citizens, and the barbarity of the gladiatorial arena, suggests that Rome's greatness was due to the Christian God, in that he wished Christ born into a united world, and wished to use the Roman Empire as a basis for his kingdom on Earth[28]. Paulinus of Nola sums up his attitude in the phrase 'Urbs in pluribus filia Sion est quam filia Babylonis'[29]. He also waxes lyrical over the throngs of Christians at St. Peter's.

The poet Claudian wrote most of his poetry on behalf of the regime of Stilicho, and it is impossible to know what his personal attitude to the people of Rome was. He reflected the propaganda of the regime and was capable of praising contradictory acts. Thus in 400 Claudian praised Stilicho for inaugurating his consulship with great largesse[30], but in 404 he praises the Emperor Honorius for not giving largesse on a visit to Rome[31]. He must therefore be used in the same way as the panegyrics; with care. Also he can provide incidental detail of use to the historian such as the provinces from which Stilicho obtained the corn needed to supply Rome during the revolt of Gildo when the African corn supply was cut off, namely those of southern Gaul, especially the area around Marseilles[32].

To turn to some Christian sources which cover events at Rome as opposed to the social matters covered by Jerome, Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola: The 'Collectio Avellana', a collection of documents covering disputes between Christian sects from the fourth century onward, is a valuable source of information on religious disputes. The

first two documents in the collection were the work of orthodox extremists, whom I will in future refer to as rigorists. The rigorists were those who had not compromised in the face of Constantius II's Arianism, and who were in favour of excluding those who had compromised from the church, or at the very least insisted on rebaptising them before re-admitting them. Taking an attitude of 'those who are not for us are against us' they were naturally a minority. The first document is an account of the events surrounding Constantius' exiling of Liberius, his appointment of Felix as pope in Liberius' place, the return of Liberius due to popular pressure on Constantius, and the riots at the papal elections of 366, told from the rigorist point of view. Although the passage shows a bias towards Ursinus, and generally attacks Damasus, it provides a useful comparison with the account of the same elections by Ammianus Marcellinus, because events as horrendous as the massacre of 160 in the Basilica of Liberius, committed by the supporters of Damasus, could not have been invented by a propagandist.

The second document is a petition addressed to Valentinian II and his co-Emperors in the 380's by two priests who had been exiled from Rome for supporting Ursinus (the Emperors from Valentinian I onward regarded the Ursinians as a threat to public order if they were in Rome itself, but were fairly tolerant towards them if they remained in the provinces), and it attempts to prove that those who have persecuted those of the 'true faith' (that is, the Ursinians and other rigorists) are liable to be punished by God, citing examples such as Arius the heresiarch, and bishop Hosius, who is classed with Damasus as a 'Praevaricator' (a compromiser). Documents 3 to 13 are particularly interesting, in that they are letters from the Emperors to Prefects and 'Vicarii' of Rome, all but one of which concern Imperial policy with regard to Ursinus and his followers, and the threat they represent to public order in Rome.

The remaining document (document 3) concerns the reconstruction of the basilica of St. Paul's-Without-the-Walls, and is addressed to Symmachus' predecessor as 'Praefectus Urbi', and document 4 refers to an 'Acclamatio' delivered soon after the election of Damasus' successor, Siricius, in which the people called Ursinus 'improbum'. Two other documents of relevance to religious disputes in the city in the Fourth Century that appear in the 'Collectio Avellana' are letters of the usurper Magnus Maximus, one to Valentinian II on the subject of Arians and Manicheans, the other addressed to Pope Siricius (documents 39 and 40). In that the 'Collectio Avellana' consists of documentary evidence for religious riots (although one or two documents show the bias of their authors) in Rome, it is one of the most important sources for this thesis after Ammianus.

Lactantius in his 'De Mortibus Persecutorum' only covers the period up to the 'Edict of Milan' in 313 and the death of Maximin II in 314 but is a useful source on the revolt of Maxentius. Lactantius was admittedly trying to prove the point that those pagan Emperors who persecuted Christians met early and/or horrible deaths, but he is otherwise fairly unbiased to those he does not hold responsible for the persecutions, including Maxentius. He was writing just after the time of these events, and 'De Mortibus Persecutorum' does not attack Maxentius as a tyrant. Constantinian propaganda had evidently not yet blackened Maxentius' character, or Lactantius was sufficiently independent not to follow it. Whichever is the case Lactantius gives a good account of the revolt, mentioning that the plebeians supported the Praetorians in placing Maxentius on the throne because Galerius, or his co-Augustus, Severus, had tried to include the people of Rome in the census to make them liable to taxation.[34] He fails to mention the revolt of Alexander in Africa, but that may be because it was unconnected (in his view) with Maxentius' relations with Galerius and the other legitimate Emperors.

In that this account does not agree with the Constantinian view of Maxentius, it is probably the most reliable account of Maxentius' reign that exists.

The Constantinian view of Maxentius is most apparent in the panegyrics and in the work of Eusebius. His 'Church History' mainly consists of quotations from documents and letters, at least for the fourth century part of it, and is fairly neutral, but his so called "Life" of Constantine is very biased in favour of Constantine, and against those with whom Constantine came into conflict. It is from the 'Church History' however that one learns that Maxentius had to turn the Praetorians onto the people during a famine riot.[35] He also claims that Maxentius' toleration of Christianity at the start of his reign was a charade, although, if the exiling of two popes and a faction leader (a Christian faction, not a Circus faction) was intended as persecution, surely Lactantius would have regarded Maxentius as one of the Persecutors[36].

2) Rome in the Fourth Century Empire

As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, fourth century Rome was a rather political backwater in the Empire as a whole: the Emperor rarely resided there, and so there was no motive of self-preservation in imperial concern for the tranquillity of the Eternal City. As the seat of a powerless Senate the city was still politically insignificant (because of that powerlessness!) and on those grounds could have been ignored by the Emperor without too much hazard. As it was, great pains were taken by the Imperial Court to ensure that the 'seditiones' of the people did not become too frequent or get out of hand; why? The second Ammianus passage at the start of the chapter may hint at the reason: the impact of the City of Rome on the Empire and its people in the fourth century by virtue of its immense prestige (as shown in the Ammianus passage) and its physical impact as the largest, by far the largest, city in the Ancient World.

This chapter will look at the city both as the Empire's source

of patriotism, and as a city that could stun even Emperors by this physical impact as the largest and most monumental city in the Greco-Roman world.

The special status of Rome may also help to explain why Emperors did not just send troops to Rome to crush the plebeians when they got out of hand. Although there was the contributory factor that by the fourth century there were few regular troops in the area round Rome to send in, because the Army could not afford to waste troops on Rome that were more useful fighting the Barbarians, the Public Relations factor would have been the decisive one. It would not do an Emperor's record any good to have the blood of inhabitants of Rome on his hand.

Other parts of the Empire were not so sensitive. Thus Theodosius ordered the people of Thessalonica massacred because they had lynched the local army commander; but as for Rome, Ambrose, complaining that Theodosius had punished the people of Callinicum for burning down the town synagogue, ordering them to repair the damage, tried to reproach Theodosius with all the homes of City Prefects burnt down by mobs, in that Emperors had not punished the people of Rome, and yet were prepared to punish provincials for things like the Callinicum incident. The fact that the injured parties at Callinicum were not even Christian commoners, while the City Prefects, even if some were pagans, were appointees of the Emperor, was supposed to strengthen Ambrose's argument, but it also shows that whereas he might order the massacre of provincials for attacking Imperial appointees (the garrison commander of Thessalonica for example), he would not be as ready to punish the Roman mob for the same thing (attacking City Prefects for example).[37]

It is also notable that Maxentius, the last Emperor to reside in Rome, who turned troops on the people during a corn riot, never seems to have recovered his initial popularity,[38] being merely tolerated until Constantine defeated him, and Constantinian propagandists made use of his massacre of plebeians in their campaign of character assassination after

his death.[39]

The city of Rome's preeminence in the Empire of the fourth century rested on two things; her physical grandeur and the fact that she was the focus of patriotic feeling, even though she was no longer the centre of government, and such reverence shows in the Ammianus passage at the beginning of this chapter (A.M. XIV.6. 5-6). As some of this reverence, no doubt, derives from the city's physical grandeur, it seems appropriate to deal with that first.

In the last third of the third century, Rome had acquired a new set of Walls, the Aurelian Wall, which was about 12 miles in length[40], and surrounded an area of approximately eight square miles. It protected the whole of the Augustan City of Fourteen Regions, taking in the large part of the city that had grown up outside the Republican Wall since the last centuries of the Republic, and after the Aurelian Wall was complete the suburbs ('Continentia') nowhere stretched further than 600 metres outside the city.[41] The Aurelian Wall was 26 feet high, and 12 feet thick, except at gates and towers,[42] when built, but at the start of the fourth century it was further strengthened by Maxentius, the last Emperor to use Rome as his capital (unless one counts the revolt of Julius Nepotianus, a member of the Constantinian dynasty, who tried to seize Rome during the reign of the usurper Magnentius, but was eliminated by the usurper after a few days of bloody rule.)[43]

Eight square miles may not seem to us to be a large area for a city, but for a pre-industrial society it was huge, and no city known to the inhabitants of the Empire of the fourth century came anywhere near it in terms of size and population.

Comparisons with other metropolises of the Empire will come later, but first I will deal with the impact this size had on visiting provincials, including Emperors. This is best illustrated by an incident in the reign of Maxentius. Galerius, the senior Eastern Emperor in the post-Diocletianic Tetrarchy, was leading an army to take on Maxentius,

who had defeated, deposed, and executed, Severus (senior Emperor of the West, after the death of Constantius I), after having got himself declared Emperor by what still remained of the Praetorian Guard in 306; when he got to Rome he found that he had too few men to mount a siege, and because he feared that Maxentius would undermine the loyalty of his troops (as he had successfully done with Severus' army) if he waited for reinforcements before the city walls, he had to withdraw and return East in frustration.[44]

Even if he had hoped to make a rapid entry into the city through a weak point, Galerius should have been aware that Maxentius would strengthen fortifications, and been prepared for a siege. As he had spent his reign in the more urbanised Eastern Empire, Galerius should have realised that large cities are difficult to besiege, and brought sufficient manpower with him, but he underestimated, and was clearly not prepared for, the size of Rome. The fact that, from Severus' experience, he knew that waiting for reinforcements would be hazardous, suggests that he thought he had brought enough men for any eventuality, including laying siege, and that therefore lack of imagination led him to believe that it would be as simple to lay siege to Rome as to any other city in the Empire. If an Emperor, who had seen a fair amount of the Roman world, including Antioch, one of the three largest cities in the Empire after Rome (the other two being Alexandria and Carthage) before the founding of Constantinople, could be taken by surprise by the size of Rome, ordinary provincials must have been even more taken aback on first sight of the City.

Nor was it merely a matter of geographical area; by the closing years of Constantine's reign (AD 337) Rome reached the peak of its grandeur in terms of public monuments. At this period the great Christian basilicas were rising up on the outskirts of the city, whilst in the centre of the city the monuments of previous eras were still intact - the Christians of

Rome had not started attacking them (they were never as fanatical as the Christians of the East, and in any case pagan monuments had the protection of Emperors in some cases).[45] With so many monumental buildings (Baths, Temples, Basilicas etc.) the area available for the inhabitants of Rome to live in was considerably less than eight square miles, and so the ordinary buildings of the city had spread upward instead of outward.

Therefore, as well as seeing massive public buildings, the newcomer to Rome might also be astounded by the size of private buildings. There were two sorts of building in Rome for housing, Insulae (Apartment Blocks) and Domus (private houses, usually only one floor in height, and consequently only affordable by the very rich who could afford to build so low on sites that must have been at a high premium). In fourth century Rome there were 46,602 Insulae to only 1,797 Domus.[46]

How many people were crammed into these Insulae - as their very name suggests, these apartment blocks took up whole city blocks, surrounded on all sides by streets - is difficult to say. Estimates of the population of the city very dramatically from less than 250,000[47] to over one and a half million.[48] A. Chastagnol's estimate for the population of the city in the late Empire[49] is 300,000 to 350,000 in total, and these figures seem to me to be grossly underestimated. They rest on the assumption that 'Insula' in the fourth century Regionaries means an 'apartment' and not an 'apartment block'.[50] Carcopino showed the grave flaws in such an assumption when he criticised two earlier scholars for making it (see note 47), and if Chastagnol is aware of these flaws he must have consciously ignored them, since to do otherwise would mean his rejection of the idea* of D. van Berchem that anyone who could prove that their 'origo' was Rome (that is that their place of birth and bringing up was Rome) would automatically receive the corn-dole (later bread dole, etc.), something Chastagnol supports elsewhere[51] in his

* For discussion of this idea see pp. 136

Préfecture Urbaine A Rome sous le bas-empire .

There are serious difficulties attached to supporting van Berchem's theory and these are discussed in Chapter 5. If one accepts van Berchem's theory it is necessary to make very low estimates of the population, since a very large proportion of the population would receive corn directly (as opposed to receiving a share of the corn ration of the member of the family who was in receipt of the corn or bread-dole.) If one rejects van Berchem the situation is one where a specified number of non-senatorial citizens of Rome are in receipt of the corn dole (regardless of whether they are employed or unemployed), and if a recipient dies or loses his rights to receive, through leaving Rome to live elsewhere perhaps, his dole ticket passes to someone else who has not until then been a recipient. The ticket can either be bequeathed or be assigned by the officials concerned with the register of dole-recipients to anyone eligible for the corn dole but not in receipt of it. Both men and women can be chosen to receive the corn/bread dole, but they have to be native to the city, and they do not receive it automatically. Children could also receive it, because of Trajan's 'alimenta'-type schemes. Van Berchem's error is in assuming that all those with 'origo' at Rome were in receipt of the food doles (see Chapter 5).

If one does not make low estimates when accepting van Berchem, one has to suppose that a million people were receiving the Corn Dole in the early Empire, when the evidence suggests that only 150,000 received it under Caesar and Augustus,[52] with a peak of 200,000 being reached by Septimius Severus' time.[53] Since the fourth century Regionaries suggest a high population for Rome, it is necessary to assume that there were, despite the evidence of numbers of recipients (in the early fifth century, nine years after Alaric's sack of Rome, 120,000 people were receiving the bread dole),[54] nearly a million recipients (the Alaric siege did not wipe out nine tenths of the citizens, and the impact was greater on the morale of the Empire than on the population of the city,* so the 120,000 does not

*though there was some decline in population in any case

support van Berchem coupled with a high estimate of the population in the mid-fourth century), or reject van Berchem's theory.

If one rejects van Berchem's idea, and assumes an average of three dependents on every recipient, even the 120,000 recipients of the bread dole of 419 become 480,000 people to whom must be added the households of senatorial families, who were not eligible for the food doles, and the 'peregrini' (people from other parts of the Empire resident at Rome, a significant enough minority that people demanded their expulsion in times of famine). This probably gives a figure of at least 600,000, and before the siege of Alaric that figure would probably have been larger.

Even 600,000 is nearly twice the population of any of the next largest cities of the Empire at the start of the fourth century (but Constantinople was well on the way to closing the gap between Rome and itself by 419).[55] Rome therefore was extremely crowded in the fourth century. As was said earlier, the need to accommodate all those people meant that the Romans had to build high even for their private buildings. Rome would have been quite a sight without her public buildings, but it is over her public buildings that writers of the fourth century waxed lyrical. For example, Ammianus Marcellinus in his description of Constantius II's visit to Rome in 357 enthuses over the sights of the city:

> "Therefore having entered Rome, the seat of empire and home of all the virtues, when Constantius came to the Rostra, the famous forum of ancient power, he was astonished, and dazzled by the density of wonders wherever he turned his eyes...
>
> Then among the heights of the seven hills surveying the parts of the city and suburbs laid out over the slopes and valleys, whatever he saw first he hoped it would stand out above all others: the shrine of Tarpeian Jove which stands out as things divine stand out over things earthly; baths constructed to the measure of provinces; the solid bulk of the amphitheatre of Tiburtine stone; the top of which human sight can scarcely discern; the Pantheon like a rounded city district, vaulted over in lofty beauty; the lofty columns with platforms one can climb to that carry images of earlier Emperors; and the Temple of the City, the Forum of Peace, the Theatre of Pompey,

> the Odeon and the Stadium and the other jewels of the eternal city. But when he came to the Forum of Trajan, the only complex of its kind in the world, so I believe, even admirable in the sight of the gods he could not move for awe."
>
> (A.M. XVI.10. 13-5.)[56]

The Ammianus passage is supposed to illustrate the physical effect of Rome on an Emperor who had spent a fair amount of his reign in Antioch and Constantinople, although it probably says more about the impact the city made on Ammianus, himself from Antioch. However, the anecdote about Constantius wanting a copy of the equestrian statue of Trajan, which comes in the text soon after the passage quoted above, would suggest Constantius himself was not unimpressed by Rome.[57] Another provincial impressed by Rome and its monuments is the anonymous author of the 'Expositio Totius Mundi':

> '...The most eminent, greatest and royal city whose name is a byeword for virtue, which is called 'Roma';... and so it is the greatest and most adorned with divine buildings; for every Emperor past and present has chosen to build something there, and individually has made something in his name.
>
> For if you wish to recall Antoni(n)us you will find innumerable Monuments; so also there is the Forum of Trajan, which has a monumental basilica, is named after that Emperor. But there are also well placed and richly decorated circuses."
>
> E.T.M. LV[58]

Rome in the fourth century had a larger monumental centre than any other of the time. As the passage above mentions, many Emperors had provided monumental buildings for the Empire's capital city from Augustus through Nero, the Flavians, Trajan, Hadrian and the Severans, to Diocletian, and this tradition was continued in the fourth century, if on a less imposing scale. Diocletian provided Rome with her grandest set of Baths (Thermae), and a replacement Senate House, Maxentius with the Temple of Romulus, in the Forum Romanum, and a Circus/Palace/mausoleum just outside the city[59], (The combination of Palace and Circus was imitated in other capital cities of the Late Empire, like Thessalonica, and most notably Constantinople -

see the article cited in note 59 - and Antioch), Constantine with his arch (though that was provided by decree of the Senate), a basilica (a secular version which he took over from Maxentius), and another set of baths; and his son, Constantius II, gave the city an obelisk, the erection of which in the Circus Maximus is described by Ammianus Marcellinus (A.M. XVII. 4). Later Emperors also contributed to the monuments of Rome, for example Valentinian I restored one of the city's bridges, Valentinian II built another one[60] and one or two other Emperors erected triumphal arches on the route to the Vatican.

Something is missing from my list of Imperial benefactions to Rome in the fourth century, and that is mention of their Christian foundations. This is deliberate, partly because the main Christian basilicae rose up on the outskirts of the city, and partly because they were provided by the Emperors through private donations in the first three-quarters of the Century, until Christianity became the official religion of the Empire. The basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls, with the building of which Symmachus had a connection,[61] was thus the first major Christian foundation at Rome provided by an Emperor in his official capacity. A road was even diverted to facilitate its construction which makes clear the official, public nature of the enterprise.

Even without the inclusion of the Christian Basilicae, the monumental zone of fourth century Rome was enormous, stretching in a wide band across the city, running from the Circus Maximus, at the foot of the Aventine in the South of the city to the Campus Martius in the North, with its Baths of Agrippa, and the Mausoleum of Augustus, for example, and stretching from the Tiber in the West to the Baths of Diocletian (about half way between the Tiber and the Eastern part of the Aurelian Wall) in the East, and taking up a large proportion of the city within the Servian Walls. Constantinople's Christian monuments were to be found in the city centre, and she had yet to be given the number of secular monuments that Rome had in the fourth century. Rome's monumental centre

would probably have left no room for residential buildings, if placed in Alexandria, Antioch or Carthage, certainly not enough room for the populations those cities supported, but Rome also had monumental buildings outside its monumental centre, namely the Christian basilicae, the largest and most significant of which were St. Peter's, St. John Lateran, and St. Paul's outside the Walls.

In addition to these, with the coming of the toleration of Christianity, a large number of martyr shrines sprang up throughout the city, drawing large numbers of pilgrims to Rome. Prudentius mentions the large number of shrines in his Peristephanon (On the Crowns of Martyrdom):

> "Scarcely is it known how full of buried saints is Rome, how the city flourishes rich in holy Sepulcres."
>
> II. 541 f.[62]

> "In Romulus' city we see the innumerable ashes of the Saints, O Valerian sacred to Christ."
>
> XI. 1f [63]

In his Contra Symmachum he also mentions the fact that Rome was also known for the quantity of its pagan shrines:

> "And there are as many Temples of the gods at Rome as shrines of heroes may be counted in the rest of the world."
>
> I. 190-191. [64]

As well as Christian Basilicae the outskirts of Rome contained some more practical monuments. For example the aqueducts pierced through the suburbs on their way to supply the city centre (near the city, on the Via Latina three aqueducts crossed, the Aqua Marcia intersecting the combined Aqua Claudia and Anio Novus in a loop, an ancient Spaghetti Junction, [redacted] - sights like that would tell the person

travelling to Rome for the first time that he was nearing the city where all roads lead to), and down the roads leading out of the city, especially the Via Appia, were the tombs of a city more than a millenium old, funerary monuments of people of every class. Fourth century Rome was thus quite a grand place to inhabit (although it was by no means a comfortable place to live in - see chapter 2), and its physical impact may have contributed to its impact as the centre of the Empire's patriotism, and may help to account for the concern of the authorities to keep Rome tranquil and keep its people happy.

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned that Emperors were sensitive about the way they treated the people of Rome, when they caused public disturbance, and refrained from trying to crush them by military force. This attitude had a more positive aspect that manifested itself when Emperors visited the city during the fourth century. In his account of Constantius II's visit to Rome in 357 Ammianus draws attention to Constantius' toleration and even enjoyment of the "dicacitas plebis", and the fact that at Rome this Emperor did not permit contests to be terminated at his own discretion as he normally did in other cities:

> "And often when he was holding chariot races, he was delighted by the repartee of the plebs, who were neither presumptuous nor deviating from their old "freedom", he himself also preserving the restraint required. For he did not (as he did in other cities) allow the races to be terminated at his convenience, but (as is the custom) allowed them to run to their various outcomes".
>
> A.M. XVI. 10, 13-14.[66]

Theodosius, who ordered the massacre of Thessalonica, visited the city in 389, and Claudian describes him as actually giving as good as he got from the people.

Diocletian, who had become used to subservience by the time he visited Rome for his Vicennalia, found the cheekiness of the plebs rather too much and left the city in a hurry, but he did not try to suppress the people of Rome[67], and realised that the people of Rome had to be given their head. No Emperor wanted the rest of the Empire to hear

that their visit(s) to Rome had been marred by their inability to mix with the ordinary people of the city. A tradition existed that the Emperor should behave like a citizen in Rome. Thus Pacatus in his panegyric on Theodosius, as was mentioned earlier, praises this absolute monarch for playing the 'princeps' (the period from Augustus to the Antonines, when the Emperor was in theory a constitutional monarch, is sometimes called the Principate, the period afterwards, when the Emperor was openly recognised as an overlord to all, the Dominate), on his 389 visit to Rome:

> "Because you were in the Senate House, on the rostra... how you were a prince to all, a senator to individuals, so that often in a civilian procession you honoured not only public buildings but also private houses with your sacred footprints, and with your military guard put aside were safer in the protection of public affection."
>
> Panegyrici Latini II (XII) 68
> Pacatus

Rome and her people were special, as the behaviour of visiting Emperors showed, and even when not in Rome, as was seen earlier in this chapter, they were more tolerant of plebeian misbehaviour in Rome than in the rest of the Empire. That is not to say that they condoned public disorder, but the people of Rome were usually treated more carefully, as the rest of this study should show. Valentinian I, who had no love for the Senate (therefore removing the motive of wishing to make life more comfortable for senators, who had to live in the city for reasons of social prestige if not by law), expressed concern for the tranquillity of Rome in a letter written to Olybrius, the City Prefect of 368-70:

> "Since nothing can be more pleasant than abundance or peace, and it is the highest fortune when these two are joined together your sublimity will see without doubt how welcome your letter was to us which announced that those who had confused the most sacred law with uproar and sedition had been suppressed and the corn supply of the common homeland of all was gradually starting to return to its former state."
>
> Collectio Avellana 10.1 69, 70

Valentinian's language in describing Rome in that passage incidentally indicates why Emperors treated the people of Rome differently from other inhabitants of the Empire. This is a Danubian soldier-Emperor, who possibly never visited the city in his life, but who regards Rome as the 'communis patria'; and the late fourth century usurpers, Eugenius and Magnus Maximus, both issued coins (an important medium of political propaganda before the advent of printing) that mentioned the city or the goddess Roma (the personification of the city which also appears in the verse of Claudian, for example in the Gildo, where she pleads with Jupiter to save her from her plight of famine inflicted by Gildo cutting off the African corn supply).[71]

Rome's prestige as the 'communis omnium patria' was out of all proportion to her political importance in the fourth century. As we have seen, the people had had no say in the way the Empire was run since the Late Republic, and the Senate, as a body, had little or no say for almost as long, although both bodies could occasionally tip the scales if the situation was right. For example it was the plebs who caused the downfall of Commodus' favourite, Cleander, in the late second century, and it was the Senate that overthrew Maximinus Thrax, after the failure of the revolt of the Gordians in Africa in 238. Senators as individuals could make life very difficult for Imperial officials, by virtue of being powerful patrons who could defy them and get away with it (unless the Emperor had the time to reduce their influence). Therefore Emperors might be suspected of concern for the tranquillity of Rome merely because they did not want to irritate the powerful senators living there through patent neglect, but Valentinian I showed concern for the tranquillity of Rome even at a time when he was persecuting the Senate through the Praefectus Annonae, Maximinus, so that it would seem that his concern for Rome was indeed genuine.

Part of Rome's prestige rested on tradition. Although she was

no longer at the heart of the Empire politically, since Emperors no longer resided there on a regular basis, it was still the heart of the Empire in patriotic terms. The last time that Rome had been sacked had been in 390 B.C. by the Gauls, and the whole of Rome's expansion northward can be fundamentally attributed to a policy of not letting that happen again. The sack of Rome in 410 A.D. by Alaric and the Goths was thus a terrible shock to Roman morale. The actual sack had little physical impact, since Alaric left the city after only three days, but it was a severe shock to morale. The 'urbs venerabilis', as Ammianus called her (see the start of the chapter), had fallen.

People had got used to thinking of Rome as the Eternal City,[72] and to the pagans it seemed as if the gods were punishing the Empire for its neglect of them. The fact that Rome was taken less than twenty years after the official proscription of paganism added fresh fuel to the debate between Christians and Pagans. Not much of the pagan side of the argument survives, but it was strong, and Augustine felt it necessary to write 22 books of 'The City of God' to counter their arguments and reassure Christians who might have been wondering if perhaps the pagans might not be right.

Christians were shocked; even Jerome, who had left the city in disgust twenty-five years before, living in a monastery in far off Bethlehem was shocked,

> "then suddenly I heard of the death of Pammachius and Marcella, the siege of the city of Rome, and the everlasting sleep of many of our brothers and sisters. I was so affected with consternation at this news that for days and nights I could think of nothing but the safety of everyone and thought myself a captive in the hands of the saints and I could talk of nothing without first asking for more certain news while in my anxiety I hung between hope and despair and torture myself with the woes of others. After the brightest light of all the lands has been snuffed out, the Roman Empire has become a headless trunk, and, I will assert more truly, in the fall of one city the whole world has perished."
>
> Jerome In Hiezechielem
> Prologus

[73]

Rome's prestige as the 'communis omnium patria' is almost certainly the main reason that the authorities in Rome and at the Imperial Court took such care to see that the people of the city should be happy, and the city itself tranquil; though some of that prestige arose from Rome's actual magnificence compared to that of other Greco-Roman cities.

Whether the Emperor and his subordinates at Rome were genuinely motivated in their tolerance to, and their efforts on behalf of, the plebeians of Rome, by patriotism alone or purely by the less philanthropic purpose of maintaining personal prestige is impossible to judge. In my opinion they were influenced by both considerations. The provision of Games was certainly influenced by considerations of prestige, whether that of the Emperor himself, if he was the provider, as in the case of the Games that Theodosius contributed to during Symmachus' tenure of the Urban Prefecture, or that of the family of the holder of Quaestorian or Praetorian Games, if a member of that family was starting his Senatorial career as a Quaestor or Praetor, as in the case of Symmachus' son. Complaints that the richer senators were spending too much on Games that poorer senators could not afford to put on Games that the people would appreciate also indicate that in this direction at least personal prestige was more a factor in the energy with which senatorial families applied themselves to their task than fear or esteem of the plebeians.[74]

However, the provision of Games seems to be the only area in which the positive aspect of seeking prestige was unaccompanied by the negative aspect of the same phenomenon, namely the avoidance of loss of prestige. The Urban Prefecture was for most Senators the summit of their career, bestowing great prestige on its holder. A Prefect was unlikely to wish the memory of his term of office to be sullied by a record of popular discontent, just as an Emperor would not wish to be remembered for turning troops on the people, and so he would want to avoid needlessly provoking the populace through unjust actions (Lampadius tried

to requisition building materials for his building projects and a mob tried to burn down his house and drove him out of the city)[75] or through negligence; for example by failing to check that the machinery for bringing corn to Rome, turning it into bread, and distributing it was working properly a prefect might fail to prevent a famine occuring unnecessarily, and thus cause famine riots, or by failing to be seen to be doing what he could to alleviate a famine, he might also cause a riot, and be relieved of the Prefecture when the Emperor heard of his negligence. It was thus in the interests of the Praefectus Urbi to do all he could to prevent situations that would cause riots, and also in the interests of his subordinates, because as Prefect of the City a leading senator had immense powers of patronage, and if a subordinate showed himself particularly able or incompetent the Prefect would notice and could help or hinder a junior senator's career by drawing him to the attention of the Emperor as worthy or unworthy of further advancement. Thus fear could play a role in motivating the Prefect of the City and his subordinates, whether fear for life and limb, or merely fear of losing face, to ensure that situations in which the people would riot happened as rarely as possible (if the African corn failed, or there were riots between factions of Christians, as in 366, then there was little the Prefect of the City could do, and he could not be held responsible for the problem, and so would not lose prestige among his peers). Those were the more practical considerations which influenced the efforts of the authorities, but it is unlikely that senators were so cynical that patriotism did not play some role in their special efforts to look after the Populus Romanus, and ensure that the reputation of the city was stained by as few riots as possible, even if, to judge from Ammianus Marcellinus, they were not entirely successful.[76] How they achieved their aim (or failed to, and why the people were not tranquil), and what efforts they made to that end - that is the impact of the populace on the government of Rome - during the fourth century, will emerge in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2

The position of the populace in Rome

A. Their Housing

The ordinary inhabitants of the city of Rome lived in 'Insulae', tenement blocks, rather than in individual houses. An 'insula', as its name suggests, might take up a whole block, being surrounded by streets on all sides. In height these 'Insulae' would have made Rome seem to have more in common with the modern world's cities than with most other cities of the ancient world, and all cities of the medieval world. Augustus established a height limit for private buildings of sixty feet,[1] and, with the need to squeeze a population estimated by some to have been a million or more[2] in the early Empire (probably less by the fourth century) into an area of eight square miles, of which some parts were occupied by the city's monuments,[3] it is likely that proprietors of insulae would have tended to build them right up to the legal maximum height - possibly above.

The floors within the Insula were divided into flats (cenacula),[4] though the ground floor usually consisted of shops, or was rented out as a single unit, in which case that floor was called a domus. There were also free standing 'domus', but because of the pressure on space these were few and extremely expensive.[5]

However, that is where the similarity with the high buildings of modern cities ends, because the inhabitants of the 'Insula' did not enjoy all present day amenities, or even, in the case of the poor who occupied the upper storeys, all ancient Roman conveniences such as drains and piped water. The chimney would not be invented for a thousand years yet in our period, and because the 'Insula' was a multi-storey building, it was impossible to have a hole in the roof of any flat, through which the smoke of an open fire could escape. Roman central heating was limited to the ground floor and then only to single rooms used for special purposes, like the caldarium (hot room) in a suite of baths. There was thus no way

that the inhabitants of the upper floors, and often the ground floor, especially if that consisted of shops, could warm themselves, except with a brazier which could not give off much heat.[6]

The cold conditions in which the occupants of an 'Insula' lived were probably made worse by the lack of glass in any but the richest of homes.[7] This meant that the inhabitant of a 'cenaculum' must either freeze to death or put some hanging cloth of skin up to keep out the wind and the rain. This latter option had two unfortunate side effects. First it made the room dark and dingy, and secondly it blocked the escape of fumes from the oven and/or brazier.

Sanitary conditions in 'Insulae' were not good either. The occupants of ground floor 'domus' and free standing 'domus' could have water piped straight to their homes from the local 'castellum' (water tank fed by an aqueduct) if they obtained the 'ius aquae' from the imperial court, and did not try to draw more water than was allowed them. However, the tenants on upper floors were not so blessed. To make water flow uphill, let alone vertically, requires substantial water pressure within the pipe, and if there is the slightest crack in the pipe, water will prefer to escape through it rather than defy gravity.

The two materials that the Romans preferred for closed system pipes necessary to move water uphill were lead and earthenware.[8] Lead pipes were more expensive to install than earthenware ones, lead being the more expensive material and needing specialists to handle it (earthenware could be handled by an ordinary bricklayer).[9] No proprietor of an 'Insula', even if he was going to supply the upper floor tenants with piped water, was going to prefer lead to earthenware, purely on the grounds of expense, but the proprietor would not choose lead even without the handicap of expense. Vitruvius shows that the Romans knew of the dangers of lead poisoning, and according to J. G. Landells, Roman lead pipes were not particularly watertight.[10] However, earthenware pipes would be little more economic for the owner of an 'Insula' as they were

made up of short segments of pipe joined together, and water under pressure would try to work its way through the joints which would require constant maintenance and large quantities of quicklime to be kept waterproof.

Even if the proprietor of an 'Insula' found it economic to have pipes supplying the upper floors of his building (and it must have been uneconomic to supply the top floors, both because the energy needed to get the water so far up was greater, and the ability of the occupants to pay extra rent for such services was inverse to how high they lived in the building) there was still the matter of how to raise the pressure in the pipes to a level where it could reach the first floor, let alone the floors above that. If the water flowed downhill from the castellum to the ground floor of the 'Insula', then, with a closed pipe system, gravity could do the work if the water did not have to be raised far, but normally a pump would have been needed, and the cost of running the pump, not to mention buying and maintaining it, would make the whole proposition of a water supply to the upper storeys of an ancient 'Insula' unworkable. Carcopino points to a law of the third century ordering that the occupants of 'cenacula' should keep water ready in their rooms to check outbreaks of fire, a thing that would be unnecessary if water was piped to the upper floors of buildings.[11]

A final argument against the piping of water to upper storeys was the fact that it was impossible to turn the water off. As there were no drains from any floors above the ground floor there would have been nowhere for the overflow to go. The Insulae of Ostia show no signs of drains from their upper floors to the sewers, and Carcopino reasonably deduces from this that the Roman Insulae were no better on this score. Juvenal, writing in the second century, mentions slops being thrown from high windows and hitting the passer-by.[12] The tenants of the upper storeys had to get their water from the public fountains, and there was presumably no difficulty in obtaining water, merely problems in getting it up the stairs to your 'cenaculum'.

The lack of water to hand and the poor lighting of these flats, which would hide the build-up of dirt, probably meant that these 'cenacula' were not kept as clean as they might be, although the lack of drainage was not as serious as it might have been, because the tenants would have usually gone to the lavatory at the public latrines, which were very public, often richly decorated, acting as meeting places where people chatted and exchanged invitations to dinner. There were other facilities for those who did not want to pay to go into the public latrines and if a tenant of a 'cenaculum' got caught short while in his flat he used a chamber pot and threw the contents into the street. This did no favour to the conditions of the street although there would have been drains in them that led to the sewers.[13]

To increase the unsanitary aspects of living in an 'Insula' there was the overcrowding. The owner of an Insula might let the upper storeys of an Insula to someone to sublet the 'cenacula' as he wished. The cost of renting even a 'cenaculum' was not insignificant, and often the sub-tenant further sub-let all the rooms in his apartment that he did not need himself, just to make ends meet. This caused conditions of appalling overcrowding and increased the level of dirt in the apartments.[14] Even if all citizens went to the baths daily, it is difficult to say whether this made life for the inhabitants of 'Insulae' easier. For a part of the day there would have been fewer cases of sweaty bodies, though perhaps more smell of olive oil, but on the other hand the prospect of coming home to such appalling lodgings after freshening up at the Baths may have made the ordinary citizens of the imperial age more discontented with their lot than they would have been if they never took a bath in their lives.

B. Their Sources of Income

Employment, or the lack of it, in the City was important for two reasons. On the one hand there was the necessity of paying for

accommodation (and food, although those on the bread dole - which did not discriminate between the employed and unemployed - were not under quite the same pressure as others), and other necessities and luxuries. On the other, there was the fact that the unemployed had more time to contemplate their wretched state than those in work, and were more likely to get involved in public disturbance in their boredom.

Those of the populace of fourth century Rome who were in regular employment, whether as craftsmen, shopkeepers, tavern keepers, or whatever, were relatively better off than the unemployed, but only relatively. In that they got some income that did not depend on the whims of a patron, they were better off, but if their income was low, or, owning their business they went into the red, they might still need a patron to help them out in hard times, and they would be as hard hit by famine as those of the plebs who lived solely on the generosity of their patrons, because when bread costs ten sesterces the low-wage earner who can only afford to pay two is no better off than the unemployed man who can only pay one. If a citizen in Rome was in receipt of the bread dole, a rise in the prices of free market bread could still affect him, since he might need extra bread to feed his family. So, even for those in employment, conditions might still be wretched.

The employed members of the populace were also better off in that their jobs might distract them from thoughts of the wretched conditions which they would have to return to at home every night. Carcopino suggests that shopkeepers might only have a single room above their shops in which to house their families and, with a large family, overcrowding might be even worse than in the upper storeys of Insulae, where other plebeians, employed and unemployed, lived.[15] Employment did not however mean that the people concerned did not have time to get bored. The working day in Rome began at dawn and

there was a long siesta from noon until late afternoon when business picked up again.[16] Starting at dawn, therefore, a Roman could fit in most of a modern working day before noon (averaging out the shorter hours of winter and the longer ones of summer), and so the plebeian in employment still had a considerable amount of leisure time, if not as much as the unemployed. Even if he went to the baths, he would still have plenty of time when he was not distracted from the misery of his living conditions, so that he was only relatively better off than his unemployed counterpart, and even there one has to make the assumption that he liked his job.

Although the employed members of the populace perhaps suffered the same misfortunes of famine, wine shortages, collapsing buildings and other misfortunes which sparked off riots, as the unemployed plebs (and probably also took part in such riots) but to a lesser degree, they were vulnerable to misfortunes to which the unemployed were not. For instance, the Praefectus Urbi, Lampadius (356-6), requisitioned building materials from traders and did not pay for them. This caused the injured parties to gather together in a mob and try to burn down the Prefect's house.

If employment (which had the minor advantages of a guaranteed income and some distraction from the appalling conditions in which the ordinary people of Rome, throughout the Imperial period, lived) was no bed of roses, what then can unemployment have been like? 'Unemployment' may not be the best of terms for the situation. Some of those not in regular employment may have lived wholly off their patrons but many may have taken what casual labour they could find (seasonal work etc. - see Chapter 5, pp.157) and relied on the support of their patrons for the rest of the time. There were two potential sources of income for those not in work, the client/patron system, and begging, but the latter was forbidden by law for able-bodied persons.[17]

In the late fourth century, a third source was coming in to rival Client/Patronage and that was Christian charity and almsgiving. This charity tended to be dispensed by rich ladies, as the most prominent men in Rome remained pagans for reasons of social status, at least until the proscription of paganism in the West following the defeat of the usurper Eugenius by Theodosius in 394. In Jerome there is a passage where he condemns those who trumpet their charity:

> "They trumpet their offerings; when they call people to a feast they take a herald along with them. Recently I saw - I will not mention names lest you think this satire - the most noble of Roman ladies in St. Peter's with emasculated wretches going ahead of her, distributing single coins to the poor with her own hand, to be thought more religious. Meanwhile as one would expect from experience - an old woman marked with her years and clad in rags ran ahead to receive another coin; but when they came to her she was offered a punch instead of a denarius and she poured forth blood for so 'great' a crime.
>
> Jerome Letters 18
> 32 lines 7 ff.

The Client/Patron relationship pervaded all life in the Roman Empire. It even extended into government.[19] The client kings of the Early Empire, like Herod the Great, were bound to Rome by the same obligations as the humblest tenant in Rome was bound to his patron. The Patron provided protection and support to the client, and in return the client did small services for his patron, like running errands, and paid his respects to the patron every morning.* In the Late Republic the client/patron relationship had a political significance since the client had his vote in the assemblies to 'sell' to his patron. Under the Empire the relationship was more of a matter of the social prestige of the Patron. The greater the number of clients paying respect to a patron, the greater his prestige. The problem with this situation was that the patron, having little to gain from his clients, except for that prestige, was less attentive to

* obviously not in the case of client kings

them as individuals than his Republican predecessors, and this state of affairs persisted into the fourth century, as Ammianus Marcellinus shows in his satirical passages on the people of Rome (XIV.6 & XXVIII.4). He complains that while a patron will take great interest in a newcomer, the newcomer will be ignored the next day, and clients who have paid court to a patron for years daily are not missed if they do not appear (this is of course satire, but satire had to have some factual basis). That merely concerned a rich client; poor clients would have been missed even less. Some patrons required more of their clients than merely to pay them a visit every morning to greet them, and Ammianus satirises these too:

> "Among these some when one begins to salute them breast to breast turn their heads (in the manner of menacing bulls) to be kissed, offer their knees to be kissed or their hands to be kissed by their admirers, considering this all they need to live in a blessed state."
>
> XXVIII.4. 10.[20]

A poorer client might have to rely on a patron of this sort for his income, and while a well-off client such as Ammianus describes, who needed his patron for advancement and protection from more powerful men, could afford to be away, and would not be missed (even if the apparent lack of interest by his patron might be hurtful to him), the poor client who relied on his patron for donatives to pay his rent and buy his food could not afford to be absent for one day. Juvenal shows that the client had to be aware of fellow clients turning his patron against him, although admittedly Juvenal is attacking Greeks who try to reserve all their patrons' affections to themselves at the expense of the other clients, probably no longer such a problem with Rome being more of a backwater, and Constantinople growing rapidly and becoming the mecca for the sorts of Greeks that Juvenal attacks.[21]

One way in which the plebeian clients were better off in the fourth century than in Juvenal's day was in their formal dress which

they had to wear on the morning call. Juvenal describes the poor man as going on his way with a grubby toga and top coat caked in mud - the streets were none too clean[22] - but in the fourth century the toga, an awkward garment that was difficult to wear, and probably trained on the ground which would be covered in mud and slops (see above), was limited solely to the senatorial class, and the normal dress for the ordinary people became the 'Paenula', a mantle which even senators were permitted to use in place of a toga when out in the street.[23]

If the employed plebeian had his work to help him forget his living conditions, the plebeian who relied wholly on his patron for his livelihood had as much time to brood as his patron allowed him. Some patrons who only looked after their clients as a social duty probably only required a morning call of their clients, perhaps to be accompanied to the Baths, and invited them for dinner, 'cena', from time to time,[24] but other patrons who liked to show off might require considerably more of their clients. Ammianus describes patrons organising their households and clients into processions: he compares them to experienced tacticians arraying their forces, putting the weavers in the vanguard, then the kitchen staff along with 'otiosis plebeis de vicinitate', and finally the crowd of eunuchs. (XIV.6.17). Such a patron probably required his clients to be around him constantly, though, if they could get his attention, he was probably the most generous type of patron to have. As well as paying the morning call to his patron, the client, whether he was required to pay great or little attention to his patron, also had the distraciton of attending the Baths himself (if he went to the Baths with his patron he is unlikely to have been able to bathe himself),[25] and of getting his daily doles, but otherwise his life must have been fairly dull and monotonous. Bearing in mind the housing conditions in which the bulk of the populace of Rome lived, and the monotony of the lives of those who were unemployed,

can it be any wonder that they looked forward to the Games as sources of excitement, and were sufficiently fond of wine that some of them (even if they needed the stimulus of known troublemakers like Peter Valuomeres - A.M. XV.7) would riot if a wine shortage caused the price to rise?

Although the populace of Rome received privileges not granted to other cities in the Western Empire of the Fourth Century, which will be described in section C of this chapter, they needed them to make life tolerable. If the provincial farmer had a hard life, he did have his farming to keep him busy, and his hovel could be kept warmer than a cenacula in an insula, and cleaner too, while the inhabitants of ordinary towns in the provinces were better off than their Roman counterparts. Their towns would not have grown so terribly disproportionate to the areas they served. If their towns were anything like Pompeii and Herculaneum, most of their homes would not have been above one storey and so they could have warmed themselves with fires, like the farmer in his hovel, and they would probably have been employed, as Rome's high unemployment rate was probably due to its population being disproportionate to the need of its hinterland for services. For the ordinary inhabitant of Rome, life could be uncomfortable even if Rome had more Aqueducts, Baths and so on, than any other city; it needed them more than other cities, and they were not up to supplying a city of modern proportions with even the comforts of the Roman world, such that all its inhabitants could live comfortable lives.

C. Their Privileges

The privileges of the people of Rome were to a certain extent rights in practice. It would have been impolitic to have withdrawn the corn or bread distributions as it would have caused riots, and even delivered Rome into the hands of any would-be usurper taking the plight of the people of Rome as his excuse for revolt. The attempt to extend Diocletian's census to the city gave Maxentius popular support for his

attempt on the purple in 306, and the first emperor, Augustus, is said to have considered abolishing the corn dole system, but changed his mind when he realised that some later politician seeking popularity would inevitably restore the free distributions.[26]

The privileges fall into two categories. On the one hand there are the necessities, the distributions, while on the other there are the 'luxuries', the Games which the people enjoyed and which increased the prestige of those who provided them. Disturbances over the famines at Rome will be discussed in the next chapter, while the efforts of the authorities to ensure that the distributions should not be interrupted where they could possibly prevent such an interruption will be covered in Chapter 5. The free bread and oil and meat and cheap wine all helped to make life for the 'plebs' in Rome tolerable, while the 'Ludi' and 'spectaculi' made life enjoyable.

Rome was not the only city to provide Games for its inhabitants during the fourth century, but its inhabitants were privileged in comparison to provincials by the number of spectacles they could attend during any year.

It was not that other towns and cities of the Empire did not have any games and spectacles; they did; but Rome had more Games than other cities. In 354 A.D. there were around 175 days of Games.[27]

The city dweller had more time for festivals than farmers in the country, but Rome had gradually accumulated more and more festivals, and, because the festivals were important instruments for keeping the people happy, little effort was made to curtail their number unless they became ridiculously numerous. Claudius, Vespasian, and Marcus Aurelius did cut down the number of Holidays, the last reducing them to 135 days, but, as has been seen, by 354 there may have been as many as 175.[28] Thus Rome had more than other cities, as well as more than the country.

Another factor in this was the expense of Games, which meant that only Rome, which relied on senators to provide its spectacles, could afford many days of them. Whereas the senators were the richest class in the Empire, and were willing to put on Games in Rome, for reasons of social prestige and asserting power over the people, the town councillor class of the Empire, who put on the shows for provincial towns, found the burden of carrying out their duties, which also included collecting taxes (they had to make up any shortfall), and other jobs which meant expense for them, so burdensome,[29] and lacking in glamour, that numerous attempts were made to get jobs carrying exemption from these duties, like serving in the army, the civil service, and the Christian priesthood. In the western Empire of the fourth century, therefore, no city could rival Rome in number of days of Games. Constantinople in the Eastern Empire could have supported as many festivals as Rome, but, because it had been founded as a Christian city, it did not have a tradition of large numbers of pagan festivals to occasion the celebration of Games.

Another aspect of the various Games at Rome was their magnificence. Provincial towns would obviously not have been able to rival Rome in the quality of their shows, because the town councillor class could not rival the spending powers of Roman Senators. Occasionally towns in the provinces may have benefitted from the generosity of a Senator who preferred to live in the provinces, but then Rome might benefit from the generosity of the Emperor, who could put on Games of even greater splendour than any senator.

The Emperor also held Games in Constantinople and other major cities of the Empire, where he resided. He would however be unlikely to make a habit of putting on Spectacles at cities other than Rome and Constantinople, because exhibiting them on was an expensive business, and holding Games at imperial expense outside the capitals

would be an expensive tradition to set up and maintain. This meant that only Constantinople could come near to rivalling Rome in the magnificence of its shows, and even if the eastern Emperor was able to put on better Games than his western counterpart, the people of Rome were still better off on average, because there was an upper limit to the magnificence of senatorial Games at Constantinople, but merely a lower limit for the senators of Rome to observe.[30]

Did this privilege of having the best and the most shows in the Empire compensate the people for their dull and uncomfortable lives? It would seem so: the excitement with which the people greeted the Games of Theodosius in the City Prefecture of Symmachus (384) is evidence of this:

> "Messengers are expected daily who will confirm that the promised acts for the Games are approaching the city; rumours of charioteers and horses are sought. Every cart, every boat is thought a possible carrier of theatrical artistes."
>
> Symm. Rel. 6.3.[31]

> "And truly sated by the Games provided by your imperial munificence the people have rapidly come to hold you in high favour. When they heard from me that the gifts of the guardians of us all were drawing near, crowds streamed out from every gate of the city, each man reckoning himself more fortunate than the rest if he was the first to see your gifts."
>
> Symm. Rel. 9.5[32]

The satirical passages of Ammianus Marcellinus also show the enthusiasm of the people for chariot racing (though not for gladiators - for which, see Chapter 3.II.c), even if they are satire:

> "Or that which is the greatest of all devotions; from dawn to dusk, come rain or come shine they argue over it, and scrutinise to the minutest detail the best and worst of charioteers and horses. And it is still a wonder to see the plebeians in uncountable number, their minds infused with an ardor hanging on the outcome of contests at the Games."
>
> A.M. XIV.6. 25-6.[33]

In another passage (XXVIII. 4. 29-40) Ammianus calls the circus the centre, the temple even of their hopes, and goes on to describe them gathering in little groups all over the city to debate about the circus, with the older men swearing by their wrinkles and white hair that the state will collapse if their team does not leap first from the stalls, or if their chariot fails to round the turning post in the Circus Maximus.

Life in fourth century Rome was not comfortable for the majority of its inhabitants but their privileges made life supportable and, in the case of the Games, enjoyable. In the following chapter the causes of fourth century riots at Rome and the other megalopolises of the period (which are the only cities likely to have mobs comparable with Rome, in size and composition; Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople) are discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RIOTING IN FOURTH CENTURY ROME - Causes

I. Introduction

Rioting was the way in which the People of Rome most directly made their influence felt on the government of the city. In fact popular expression was the only way the fourth century plebs could make themselves felt in the government. But from this public expression arose most of the business of the city authorities. The plebs certainly made their influence felt indirectly, even if they did not realise that they were doing so. Much of the activity of the Praefectus Urbi and his subordinates was involved in avoiding Plebeian displeasure, and containing it if it should break out.

Although rioting was not the only way in which the Plebs showed its feelings, I am grouping all forms of Popular expression in fourth century Rome under the generic title of Rioting for the purposes of unity of theme, and because the people most affected by plebeian displeasure, city authorities, Senators, and Peregrini, like Ammianus Marcellinus, had got into the habit of associating plebeian expression with riots:

> "Under his (Maximus') administration the supply of food was abundant and the complaints of the plebs often accustomed to be aroused ceased."
>
> A.M. XXI. 12. 24. [1]

> "Under this Apronianus, so constantly did the supply of necessities abound, that not even gentle grumbling over shortages of food arose, a problem which often affects Rome."
>
> A.M. XXVI. 3.6. [2]

> "For we are fearful lest a delay may obstruct the corn supply in the meantime and a plebeian disturbance may arise."
>
> Symmachus Epistles IV. 5 [3]

I will deal with the causes of rioting/popular expression in two parts (II and III). In the first part I shall outline the causes of popular disturbance in Later Imperial Rome, and give examples of each from that period. In the second part I shall compare the causes of riots in fourth century Rome with the causes of riots in fourth century Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople, the megalopolises of the East. In the West Carthage merits mention, but there is little source material for the behaviour of its populace during the fourth century. In addition comparison will be made with the causes of riots in earlier periods of Rome's history. The next chapter will concern the types of riot and the immediate remedies available to the authorities.

II. Causes of Public Disturbance - Fourth Century Rome

(a) Food and Wine

i) Corn Shortages - Of all the causes of riots this was probably the most serious, both because the Plebs' very lives depended on it, and because it was the most difficult grievance of the Populus to avoid, and/or redress. If there was a Wine riot a few banishments and a bit of pressure on profiteers could remedy matters (see below), but the bread distributions were dependent on a large number of uncontrollable factors, such as the weather, politics, and the success of the year's African harvest, and while most years these factors do not appear to have been unfavourable, if there was a corn shortage, it was not easy to arrange for replacement corn to be imported. Communications in the Roman Empire were painfully slow, and messages could not travel faster than a galloping horse on land or a fast ship with the wind behind her by sea, so that if Imperial help was needed following an African crop failure the Emperor had to be warned in plenty of time, sometimes before the failure even happened, if he was to organise alternative supplies from another province. The message would have to travel from Africa to the Emperor to the province chosen

by the Emperor to provide the alternative supply, before the corn could even set off for Rome, and matters might further be delayed if the Western Emperor had to appeal to his Co-Emperor in the East, as seems to have happened in 384 (see below). More often the Prefect of the City appealed to the Senate, but of that more in the section on short-term solutions.

There is literary evidence for up to twelve Corn shortages at Rome between 306 and 400. They were 308 (4), 359 (5), 361 and 368 (6), 376 (7), 383 (8), 384 (9), 388 (10), 394/5 (11), 395/6 (12), 397/8 (13), and 399 (14). The fifty year gap between the 308 famine and the 359 famine may mean nothing more than that the few literary sources for the first half of the fourth century cannot be bothered to mention any famines at Rome during that period, but it could also mean that there were none. Consider: the 308 famine and 361 famine were due to politics, and the 359 famine was merely due to the weather preventing the African Corn fleet from entering Portus, the port of Rome*; there is therefore no definite mention of an African crop failure before the reign of Gratian, and we know so little about the 376 famine at Rome that the first definitely recorded African crop failure that century is in 383. The 361 famine was due to the incipient civil war between Julian and Constantius II, and was merely due to a diversion of the African fleet to Constantinople.

Having said that, why should there have been no non-political famines in the first three quarters of a century, except the 359 one? If there were none, the answer probably lies on the banks of the Nile. Until Constantine dedicated Constantinople as a rival to Rome, and earmarked the Egyptian Corn for his new city, Egypt was a constant source of grain for the Eternal City, except in times of political tension, as during the revolt of Maxentius, and probably the wars between Licinius and Maximin Daia, and Licinius and Constantine. If a crop failure

*and the possibility of a 368 famine rests merely on a letter of Valentinian I expressing relief that the Corn supply is normal again; there is no indication how big the shortfall was, and what caused it.

ocurred in Africa during 324 when Constantine was engaged in fighting Licinius, there might be another reason for the cool reception Constantine got in Rome in 326 besides the Crispus affair. The corn that Rome received from Egypt may not have been as much as in previous centuries because Diocletian had instituted a corn/bread distribution for the Plebs of Alexandria, and Egyptian corn was probably used to support the army in wars against Persia. It was certainly used for that purpose by the middle of the century (see below).

The diversion of the Egyptian corn to Constantinople did not have an immediate effect on Rome. Constantinople did not immediately fill up and as it was not until the 380s that Constantinople outgrew Constantine's walls, for a long time there was a healthy surplus of Egyptian corn, which could be sent to Rome, or to support the Eastern Army against the Persians. Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia were probably able to cater for most of Rome's corn needs, but Egypt seems to have been sending corn to the Eternal City until Gratian's reign and Symmachus in Relatio 37 seems to think Egypt should still be supplying Rome legally though not practically. It was probably an insignificant amount, though probably enough to give a City Prefect breathing space until loss of any year's African corn supply could be made up for elsewhere. The Expositio totius mundi does not mention Rome as one of Egypt's beneficiaries, but mentions Egyptian corn supplying the Eastern provinces during Constantius' Persian War:

> "For Constantinople in Thrace is heavily dependent on it for food; similarly also the East relies on Egypt, particularly because of the Emperor's army and the Persian War. Therefore, no other province can suffice if not divine Egypt."
>
> E.T.M. XXXVI [15]

Egypt should have been contributing corn to Rome even after Gratian's reign, but was not. The probable reason for this was that its corn was needed elsewhere. Elsewhere was Constantinople, which would

suddenly have required a lot more Egyptian corn. There were two reasons for this. One was that if Constantinople had been relying on any of the Black Sea corn that had supported the Greek cities of eight centuries before, she was cut off from that source of corn and others in Thrace by the Gothic revolt which led to Hadrianople. The other reason for her sudden need of Egypt's total grain resources was that apart from her gradual filling up since Constantine, she must have received a lot of refugees from the Gothic revolt; hence her filling up to the Constantinian Wall by the early 380s, although the worst of the revolt would have been over by then.

Famine may have been one cause of rioting, but there was more than one cause of famines in Rome. The most easy cause to identify is of course the cutting off of the Roman corn supply for political reasons. For other causes of famine in fourth century Rome we are fortunate to have Ammianus and Symmachus, but political famines tend to get mentioned, and it is little surprise that the only known Roman famine in the first half of the century was a political famine. The political famines of the fourth century were 308 (caused by Domitius Alexander revolting against Maxentius and cutting off Rome's corn supply), 361 (the African Corn Fleet was diverted to Constantinople to prevent it falling into Julian's hands - a move probably initiated by Gaudentius, the agent Constantius had sent to secure Africa for him) and 397 (Gildo withheld Rome's Corn supply; Symmachus persuaded the Senate to declare Gildo a public enemy for this, but was driven from Rome by the enraged Plebs blaming the Senate's decree for Gildo's cutting off the Corn supply, and only realising they had reversed cause and effect later, when they called for Symmachus' return).

Another cause of famine at Rome was the weather, as exemplified in 359 during the prefecture of Tertullus, when bad weather stopped the Corn ships entering Portus. This and the Gildo episode are both examples of the irrationality of mobs, because the blame for the bad

weather was put on Tertullus, as if he could work miracles. Perhaps it merely shows the plebeians were not very well informed and did not know the cause of their trouble, just taking up a rumour that the Prefect of the City was to blame, behaving as in the bad old days of Tacitus.

The third type of famine caused is administrative inefficiency. Examples of this are less certain because what looks like slowness of despatch of corn from Africa may look like administrative inefficiency to senators in Rome, but in fact be a symptom of something else. 399 seems a genuine example and there is a Theodosian Code law of 397, shortly before Gildo cut the corn supply (C.Th. XIII. 5.27) which orders the despatch of a third of the year's corn supply at the start of the navigation season, and saying that the Praetorian Prefect will see to the restoration of old and collapsed fleets of corn ships. The famine of 384 appears at first sight to be due to administrative inefficiency. Symmachus in Relatio 18 complains that 'aestate provecta cum ex Africanis portibus minimum devehatur, non inani tangimur metu, ne res annonaria in graves cogatur angustias' (Symm., Rel., 18.2). The way he complains about the lack of corn coming out of the African ports seems to suggest that he is not aware of a famine in Africa, and so, that it is due to poor administration. There is, however, a more probable explanation for the lack of corn from African ports. There had been a very severe crop failure in Africa in 383,[16] with the peasants having to eat acorns, and it seems highly likely that there would not be a lot of seed corn around for planting to produce the 384 harvest (crops in Africa were grown during the wet winter season).[17] Therefore the 384 harvest would not be large enough to support the inhabitants of the North African provinces, and have a surplus over to send to Rome. It seems likely that the Imperial authorities were aware of this, and lightened

Africa's tribute for the year, making arrangements for Egyptian corn to be sent to Rome, apparently failing to warn the 'Praefectus Urbi' of what was happening. The evidence for this is the speed with which the Egyptian corn arrived in Rome following Symmachus' Relatio 18.

From the Theodosian Code we can gather that Sallustius Aventius, Symmachus' predecessor, was still 'Praefectus Urbi' in June 384, and that Symmachus took up office by July. The end of the navigation season was in mid-October. There were therefore only three and a half months between the earliest possible time Symmachus could have written Relatio 18 and the latest that anything could be done in response. That is barely enough time for alternative supplies from Egypt to be organised and sent to Rome.

First the Relatio has to reach Valentinian II, then Valentinian has to appeal for help to Theodosius and that would take a week or two at the very least, and then Theodosius has to let the relevant officials in Egypt know, and extra ships have to be gathered in Alexandria to carry corn to Rome, something which Symmachus complained in Relatio 37 had not been done in the last years - which implies that the administrative machinery for sending corn to Rome would not have been up to scratch, due to neglect. This would cause further delays at Alexandria. Once Alexandria has despatched the Egyptian Corn it will take two to three months for the grain ships to reach Portus, at the mouth of the Tiber, possibly more; the Alexandria-Rome run was no longer such a regular event as it had been in previous centuries, so there is no guarantee that the crews of the extra ships needed on this occasion would be as skilled at fighting a head wind all the way between Alexandria and Sicily as their forebears. By the time they reached Rome the winter storms would be starting.

However, the relief corn from Egypt (see Relatio 9, where Symmachus thanks Theodosius for his gift of corn and contributions to

the Games just held in Rome) did arrive on time, and before the end of the navigation season, because Symmachus is able to complain that, now that the corn famine has been averted, the slowness with which oil is being sent from the African ports is disturbing him (Relatio 35), because he had warned the relevant authorities of his needs some time before. I think therefore that arrangements for diverting the Egyptian corn to Rome had been made before Symmachus entered his Prefecture (and that somehow Symmachus was only informed of this after he had written Relatio 18 and Relatio 37), that the Egyptian Corn fleet was already bound for Rome when Symmachus wrote Relatio 18 and that the Imperial authorities intended Africa to send what little it could to keep the city until the Egyptian fleet could arrive.

The final cause of famine at Rome was of course famine in Africa, and this seems to have happened in 388, when Theodosius arranged for Macedonian corn to be shipped to Rome.[18] There was of course famine in 383, but it is not easy to ascertain if Rome itself suffered that year. In Relatio 3, on the Altar of Victory, Symmachus makes a lot of the sufferings of the provincials during the famine, but says virtually nothing about what happened at Rome. It is not impossible that arrangements had been made for the provisioning of Rome:

> "Therefore with great need you have warned of a shortage in the coming year. For what hope is there when in the provinces of Africa the crop will not equal even the small sustenance needs, and seed will be imported next year from other lands? With justice therefore the concern of the provincials flies to the providence of the eternal emperors." [19]
>
> Symm. Ep. IV. 74

J. R. Palanque in 'Famines à Rome à la fin de la IVe siecle' dates the above epistle of Symmachus to Eusignius, the then Proconsul of Africa, to late 382, unlike Seeck in the M.G.H. edition of Symmachus' works, who puts it in 383. If Palanque is right there would have been time to avert famine at Rome in 383. However, Ambrose in Epistle 18 says that

the corn fleet mobilised after the death of Gratian was unable to assure the corn supply.[20] Similar things may have happened in the 390s. If there was a famine at Rome in 394/5 (see note 11), then there may have been a repeat of the events of 382-4. What suggests this is that oil shortages follow both the 384 and 395/6 famines at Rome, that is, both second year famines.

While famines probably always caused some sort of disturbance among the people, there is not always conclusive evidence that such disturbances took place, and what form the plebs' action took. In 308 the people rioted against Maxentius, because the African corn supply had been cut off by the revolt of Domitius Alexander in Africa. This and the 359 Tertullus riot were just asking for something to be done by those who were in charge. In 361 we do not have the Plebeian reaction to the diversion of the African corn fleet to Constantinople, but Mamertinus in his Panegyric of Julian[21] says that the Senators, angered by this diversion, came to Julian to ask for help, and this anger probably arose from fear of what this action would do to their relations with the plebs, if there had not already been popular protest.

Sometimes the plebs rioted demanding the expulsion of the Peregrini, people from anywhere outside the City who could not claim 'origo' in Rome. This happened on at least two occasions in the fourth century. Ambrose mentions them both in his De Officiis (I.iii.ch.7 45-51). In the first (in 376)[22] a Christian Praefectus Urbi stood up to the Plebs' demands and appeased them by other means. In the second case a pagan prefect (generally assumed to be Symmachus)[23] did expel the Peregrini although there is no firm evidence that the plebs demanded this, and Symmachus in a letter to Nichomachus Flavianus senior (Ep. II. 7.3) which was probably written in 384 says that he fears an expulsion of peregrini. It seems unlikely that any other expulsions in the 380s and 390s would have escaped mention in the letters of Symmachus, so this is probably the one mentioned in Ammianus Marcellinus.[24] Ammianus notes

that while the other peregrini were expelled, the dancing girls were allowed to remain. Symmachus does not mention any agitation for an expulsion, so it is difficult to know if the plebs agitated other than in 376.

After 384 there is only evidence of whether there was plebeian rioting actual or expected. In 383 Symmachus, who is obviously absent from Rome, says 'frequens sermo est, tenui victu in turbas plebem moveri' (Ep. II. 6.2) which finally disproves my idea above that Rome might have been unaffected by the 383 famine. There was also rioting in the 395/6 famine (Symm. Ep. IV. 18.3, VI.13, and IX.124) and in 397/8 Symmachus tells Stilicho 'in metu enim sumus ne...perturbatio plebis oriatur' (Ep. IV.5). This did in fact happen, as Symmachus was driven out of Rome and only came back after the Gildonic war when the plebs regretted their action and demanded his return (Ep.VI. 66). An interesting feature of the 394/5 famine (if it happened, otherwise 395/6) is that while we may not know if there was rioting we have evidence of another expression of public opinion: Nicomachus Flavianus junior had successfully managed the corn supply as city prefect of Eugenius. When Eugenius was defeated, he became unpopular, but when in the following winter there was a famine at Rome under one of his successors, his prefecture came to be seen as a golden age by the plebs and they showed their disfavour with the current authorities by their favour to Flavianus.

ii) Oil Shortages - Oil shortages are not known to have caused any riots in the fourth century, but Symmachus, who is the only evidence for the oil shortages known to have occurred in the period, seems concerned. Even if Relatio 35 might be dismissed as Symmachus doing his job as 'Praefectus Urbi', Epistle IV.18 about the 396 oil shortage is written by Symmachus as a private citizen, although he might be a patron of the owners of 'Mensae Oleariae'. The oil distribution which dated back to Septimius Severus, according to the Augustan History, was evidently

profitable for the owners by Constantine's reign because a law of 328[25] shows that people were sufficiently eager to own oil tables that the government felt able to charge 20 folles for a vacant table, instead of having to dragoon some corporation into owning the tables by force of law. Therefore the plebs must have been paying some tip to the owners when they collected their ration (see Chapter 5. III.1.)

The oil would have been used for lighting, cooking, and as soap for washing, but as it was not a matter of life and death, unlike corn shortages, the people may not have felt the need to protest violently about not getting their oil, whereas scholars working into the night and upper class dandies who liked spending too much time in the Thermae, may have felt the absence of oil rather more intensely than the plebs. This is not to say the plebs did not like bathing, but in their garrets they may not have noticed they needed a bath as much as their rich contemporaries in their marble halls.

iii). Wine shortages - There were three wine riots in the fourth century that we have definite record of. The first was in the first prefecture of Orfitus (353-355) and the wine scarcity which Ammianus Marcellinus mentions as being the cause of the riots may well have arisen in connection with the Arca Vinaria scandal.[26] Ammianus comments thereafter that the people are eager for the unrestrained use of wine and are roused to frequent and violent disturbances for it (A.M. XIV. 6.1) and in the following satirical passage on the inhabitants of Rome suggests that some plebs lived their lives in the wineshops (he actually says 'spent the whole night in the wineshops', not all day).

As the passage about the frequency of wine riots comes just before the satirical passage, it becomes slightly suspect, and there are only three mentions of wine riots happening, in the whole of Ammianus; apart from a letter of Symmachus referring to the recall of his father in 375 after the third of the wine riots mentioned in Ammianus[27] no other

mentions of wine riots at Rome occur in the late fourth century. There is no evidence for the early part of the century. It may just be that, apart from Ammianus, most writers did not think to mention wine riots, but it seems more likely that there were few disturbances, connected with wine shortages, that were large enough to be noteworthy - in XVII.11. Ammianus himself says there were mutinous disturbances under the 'Praefectus Urbi', Iunius Bassus, but does not say what they were about.

The second riot in Ammianus is under the Prefect Leontius, and is the Valuomeres riot, and is an indication that the plebs may not have felt they had a just cause when rioting over the scarcity of wine. Leontius got away with intimidating them and they vanished quickly enough after the arrest of Valuomeres to suggest that they were slightly ashamed and they did not want the notoriety of being arrested and marked out as troublemakers in the sight of their fellow citizens. In a famine riot it is doubtful that they would have had such qualms.

The third riot is the one in 375 which drove Symmachus' father out of Rome following a rumour that he would rather use his wine to mix concrete than sell it cheaply to the plebs. This wine would have been sold on the free-market in Rome, probably through the wineshops and cabarets, and the importance of the free-market price to the Plebeians was that the price of the cheap wine they received was linked to the market price and had been since at least the reign of Valentinian I, who put the price of the cheap wine at three quarters of the market price at Rome. The wording of the law (C.Th.XI.2.2) issued in 364 suggests that the cheap wine was normally paid for by the plebs before that date and that Valentinian is just trying to make the price fair and economic. The money thus raised went to paying the transport costs of the proprietors of Italy who were expected to transport their wine tribute to the city in person, and towards the city's building fund. The percentage link between the price of cheap wine and other wine meant of course that a rise in the latter's price led to the cheap wine no longer being cheap,

so that City Prefects had to step in to keep down the market price if a wine shortage occurred.

iv) Meat shortages - there is no recorded shortage of pork, which was the meat ration in the fourth century, during the century, and there are no riots regarding the pork ration recorded. The pork ration which may have been free in the early part of the century (Zosimus II.9) and was probably free at the end of the century, if the situation in 396 was anything to go by, was not a very substantial part of the plebeian diet. For five months of the year they received 5lbs of pork a month from the Suarii, who spent the other seven months collecting the swine from Italian proprietors to provide the pork.[28] There were indeed no riots in the fourth century, but in 396 the meat ration was used to placate the plebs in a corn famine, which suggests the ration was free:

> "For 20 days this expenditure promises a little food to the city. In addition a second resolution of our most illustrious Senate will contribute to security. The distribution of meat has also nonetheless comforted the spirits of the Roman People."
>
> Symm. Ep. VI.26 [29]

b) Religion

In the absence of any impact the 'Populus Romanus' might have, apart from riots, to make sure that those with political power did not neglect their food supply, it tried to make sure its members' afterlives would be assured by getting involved in religion and religious politics. Even when they were pagans they had shown themselves concerned with religion. They gained a reputation for being superstitious, as is shown by the story of Marcus Aurelius and the charlatan who climbed into a tree and released a stork from his clothing as he fell out of the tree to make the plebs think there had been a miracle.[30] A large number of Eastern cults such as Isis worship and Mithraism first gained currency at Rome among the plebs before the upper classes accepted them altogether. An example of the pagan plebeians' feelings on religion in the fourth

century is provided during the reign of Maxentius. Zosimus (II.13) tells us that when the Temple of Fortuna was on fire and the people were rushing to save it, a soldier shouted out blasphemies about providence. He was turned on by the people and killed, and only Maxentius prevented the Praetorians taking revenge. Later on the people showed just as much enthusiasm in their pursuit of Christianity.

Before dealing with Christian disputes as a cause of rioting at Rome it would be as well to discuss the numbers of Christians in Rome in the fourth century. Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History says that in 251 there were 46 priests, 7 deacons, 7 sub-deacons, 42 acolytes, and 52 exorcists, lectors, and doorkeepers employed by the Christians in Rome, who supported 1500 widows and beggars. T. D. Barnes[31] suggests that from these figures a total number of Roman Christians in excess of 30,000 can be implied. By the Great Persecution of Diocletian this number must have grown as there was no serious persecution between Valerian and Diocletian (i.e. 260-301), and after the Diocletianic persecution, under Maxentius, the quarrels between those who had stood firm in the face of the Great Persecution and those who had not and wished to be received back into the Church were a serious enough threat to public order that Maxentius sent two Popes and a faction leader into exile,[32] acts which Constantinian propagandists, such as the source of the Liber Pontificalis, were able to misrepresent as pagan persecution of Christianity to Maxentius' discredit.

By the middle of the fourth century the Christians were definitely numerous enough that, when they rioted in the Damasus/Ursinus papal election, the pagans among the plebeians, if there still were any, did not try to intervene and stop the fighting between their Christian neighbours, which must have been making Rome a very uncomfortable place to be for the innocent bystander. By the end of the century Rome was probably largely Christian, although Ammianus Marcellinus, who was in

Rome during the last two decades of the century, does speak of the annual procession of the Mother of the Gods in the present tense, and it would be a disappointing spectacle if there were only a few pagan lords involved, and there was no plebeian involvement.[33]

What then were the religious riots of the fourth century and their causes? Despite the enthusiasm of the people of Rome for their newfound religion, they seem to have confined their disturbances on religious matters to disputes within Christianity, and there is not the same evidence of Christians attacking pagans in Rome as in, say, Alexandria. The only hints that there may have been attempts to pull down pagan temples in Rome are in a law of Constans addressed to the Praefectus Urbi in 342 (C.Th. XVI. 10.3), where the Emperor orders the preservation of pagan temples from which the people's entertainments begin. Perhaps there had been attempts to pull down some pagan temples, but the fact that it was the people's interest that Constans had in mind, suggests that if such activity was happening, it was not with popular support, and it seems more likely that the temples were at most being allowed to decay, and pagan prefects of the city sometimes restored them; for example Praetextatus separating the walls of private houses irreverently built up against 'aedibus sacris' (A.M. XXVII.9.10), and Claudius in 374/5 restoring the Portico of Good Outcome (XXIX.6.19).

It may be merely a matter of lack of evidence that we hear little of Christian/Pagan riots, but it is probable that they did not happen. Paganism at Rome had some very powerful protectors, that is the pagan senators of the time who, like Praetextatus and Symmachus, tended to be the most powerful and influential members of the Senate, often taking the lead at Rome, because the most able Christian laymen of the time tended to hold positions at Court; like Petronius Probus, a leading Christian aristocrat from Rome, of whom Ammanius says that he was like a fish out of water, if he was not holding prefectures

(A.M. XXVII.11.3). The pagan senators were the top of the Client/ Patronage tree, and so it would not have been wise for Christian plebs to attack pagan temples when their welfare may have derived from the very protectors of them.

On the other side of the coin, the pagan plebeians probably had no grudge against their Christian neighbours, as they probably took advantage of Christian charity, as exemplified by the great Christian noble ladies dispensing largesse at St. Peter's.[34] Julian the Apostate was put out that the Christians not only looked after their own people but also after the needy among the pagans.[35] Anti-pagan action tended to take the form of Christian prefects of the city removing cult statues from pagan shrines and putting them in the public baths where they were merely works of art.[36]

Even if the Christian plebeians did not choose or dare to attack pagans, they were less restrained in their attacks on the Jews. During the reign of the usurper Magnus Maximus a synagogue at Rome was set on fire by a mob, and Maximus punished the Roman people for this. (This is one of the points on which St. Ambrose (Epistle 40) attacks Theodosius, who punished some Christians who had burnt down a synagogue at Callinicum in the Eastern Empire, in that Theodosius can be equated with the usurper he had defeated in 388 by his behaviour.)

The disputes within Christianity in Rome during the fourth century were two, concerning two different problems, but otherwise very similar. They came about two generations apart, but involved similar types of people in the opposing factions. The first dispute arose after the Great Persecution of Diocletian, and concerned the problem of whether those who had lapsed in the Persecution should be readmitted into the Church. On the one side were those who felt they should readmit suitably penitent apostates back into Christianity, on the other were the extreme rigorists who had not lapsed, and had some-

times gone to prison for their refusal to kow-tow, and who regarded even 'Traditores' (people who had handed over the scriptures to the authorities on the grounds that what mattered was the contents of the books and not the actual paper itself, and had not actually sacrificed) as apostates. It was Rome's equivalent of Africa's Donatist crisis, fought over for exactly the same issues. However, while there were riots in Rome,[37] the Roman crisis seems to have been resolved; the Donatist crisis was not. Maxentius banished Pope Marcellus, the first bishop of Rome to be elected during his reign. That the banishment was as a result of a dispute between Christians is shown by the epitaph Damasus had put on Marcellus' tomb, which says of him: 'crimen ob alterius Christum qui in pace negavit finibus expulsus patriae' (I.L.C.V. 1.962). Marcellus was therefore a rigorist, and may have tried to expunge the name of his predecessor, the Traditor Marcellinus, from the list of popes.[38] There followed a lapse in the See of Rome until about 308, when Maxentius, who had just broken with his father Maximian, was in need of all the support he could get, including Christian support. Elections were held. There were riots and Eusebius, the successful candidate (not the Constantinian Eusebius), and Heraclius, leader of the rigorist faction, were both exiled.[39]

Pope Miltiades was elected in the last years of Maxentius' reign and was sent by the Emperor to organise the return of Church property to the Christians in Africa. Evidently the rigorists and the party of the lapsed had made up their differences, as Miltiades survived into Constantine's reign, and there were obviously no public disturbances to occasion action by the civil authorities. The rigorists may have won the argument, because Pope Eusebius is not mentioned in the Liber Pontificalis (a list of the early popes with largely fictitious accounts of their doings), but Damasus put an Epigram on his tomb (I.L.C.V. 963) as he had on the tomb of Marcellus.

This leads on to the second dispute, on a different matter, but in which Damasus significantly seems to have been a leader of the moderate party, as Eusebius had been in the first dispute. This second dispute arose from the Emperor Constantius II's Arianism (a heresy that denied the divinity of Christ, and caused an immense amount of trouble in the Greek speaking part of the Church in the fourth century - Latin had yet to be refined into a language for debating the finer points of theology) and his banishment of Pope Liberius for a matter connected with the Arianism/Orthodox controversy.

This dispute at Rome arose in 355, and Ammianus Marcellinus explains its origin. He does not fully understand the situation, because he only states the official charges made against St. Athanasius by his enemies, that is, sorcery and divination, and he shows no knowledge of the actual reason for the Christian dispute: the Arian heresy. Constantius had managed to get two synods of the Church, one of the eastern bishops, one of the western bishops, to condemn the champion of the orthodox creed, St. Athanasius, catholic/orthodox bishop of Alexandria, and we gather from Ammianus (XV.7.6-10) that Liberius was one of those who supported those who condemned the beliefs of Athanasius at the synod which deposed Athanasius from his bishopric.

Liberius did not, therefore, support the Athanasian party in the Church, and his stand against Constantius was therefore not a matter of doctrine but discipline, a fact borne out by Ammianus, who says that Liberius, when asked to depose Athanasius from the priesthood altogether (which shows the importance of the pope in the whole church, at that time - that Constantius should feel the support of the bishop of Rome was necessary in the deposition of a churchman), refused to allow a man to be condemned unseen and unheard. This was the cause of Liberius' exile. He was not a rigorist and he eventually gave in to Constantius, and when he returned to Rome the Liber Pontificalis, suspect source though it is, says of him "Non tamen rebaptizatus est Liberius, sed

consensum praebuit" (L.P. XXXVII).

The Ammianus passage (XV.7.10) is also important in showing that bishops of Rome could rally enough support from the people that the Prefect of the City had to smuggle Liberius out of the city at the dead of night. It is an indication of how enthusiastic the people could be about their religious leaders.

It also shows that the people were capable of great loyalty to people they liked, and this loyalty continued to be shown. Both Theodoret and the Collectio Avellana agree that the people showed disdain for Felix, the pro-Constantian bishop, who replaced Liberius: "Felicem archidiaconum ordinatum in loco Liberii episcopum susceperunt. quod factum universo populo displicuit et se ab eius processione suspendit" (C.A.I.2). Theodoret says that the people would not enter a church where Felix was praying.

When Constantius visited Rome in 357, the return of Liberius was requested. The Collectio Avellana says the people demanded his return, but Theodoret says that it was some Christian aristocratic ladies. However Theodoret also records the 'acclamatio' of the people on hearing the news that Liberius was to be returned to them. This 'acclamatio' (the plebeians demonstrating their feelings on a piece of news announced to them, at the Circus) and the boycotting of Felix show that religion could cause other forms of popular expression than merely riots.

Liberius returned from exile, probably more popular than ever, and he 'consensum praebuit', that is showed moderation to the supporters of Felix. When he died and there were riots over who should succeed him, his memory was so dear that the rigorists who wrote the first document in the Collectio Avellana did not assail Liberius' surrender to Constantius, in fact ignoring it. They even admit that Liberius took pity on those who supported Felix (C.A. I.3), but they then try to appropriate

Liberius' memory for their own cause.

These rigorists are clearly the Ursinians, and the anti-Damasan prejudice they show does not match with the forgiveness of Liberius for his opponents, although they claim to have been the only people to have stayed loyal to him in his exile. The letter that is the second document of the Collectio Avellana is also written by rigorists appealing to the clemency of the Emperors of 383-4, and it goes back over the history of the Arian/rigorist disputes since about the time of Constantine. It tries to show, by examples of God intervening against those who had submitted to Constantius, the 'Praevaricatores', and in favour of the rigorist position, that those who have prevaricated should not be readmitted to the catholic church. Liberius is significantly not mentioned as a prevaricator, although Ammianus shows he held anti-Athanasian views (see above) and went into exile for non-doctrinal reasons.

Damasus, however, is classified as an enemy of the rigorist Luciferians, whom later rigorists regard as on the side of the angels. (Lucifer was exiled at the same time as Athanasius and Liberius, and was so extremely against forgiving those who had erred into Arianism under Constantius that he came to be a schismatic himself.) In the Damasus and Ursinus riots the supporters of Damasus were therefore the moderate party who favoured pardoning those who had repented of being Arians, and were in the forgiving spirit of Liberius, while the Ursinians, who claimed to have remained loyal to Liberius, were rigorists, and not in the spirit of Liberius. The rigorist supporters of Damasus' rival for the See of Rome, Ursinus, were the 'sancta plebs' according to the first document of the Collectio Avellana, and Damasus' supporters are dismissed as charioteers, gladiators, and gravediggers. Ammianus (XXVII.3. 12f) does not say what the social composition of the two sides was, and it seems likely that we have something similar to the usual

dismissal of the other side as being of low repute (for example Catiline's supporters in Cicero's Catiline speeches).

The people had probably liked Liberius for his generosity of spirit, and it is likely the Ursinians' self-righteousness, which oozes out of Collectio Avellana I, would mean that the Ursinians were a small enough minority of citizens that Praetextatus had no trouble in deciding that he should support the Damasans to restore public order. It was only the fanaticism of the Ursinians that caused them to be so persistent in the face of such overwhelming odds, and if Ursinus had been at all popular with the plebs there would not have been peace in the City once the leading Ursinians had been exiled. The way the plebeians showed support for Liberius in his exile shows that Ursinus did not enjoy popular support in his absence, and when Damasus died, and his successor was elected unanimously, there was an 'acclamatio' against Ursinus: "proinde quoniam religiosum Siricium antistem sanctitatis sic praeesse sacerdotio voluerunt, ut Ursinum improbum acclamationibus violarent " (Collectio Avellana 4).

Religion then was an active interest of the Populus Romanus, and the main cause of religious riot was not pagan-Christian relations, but the problems caused by persecution, first of Christians in general, under Diocletian and the Tetrarchy, later of people opposed to the religious policy of the Arian Constantius II in the 350s. These persecutions led to riots between those who had stood up to the persecutions and those who were ready to forgive those who had not stood up to persecution (rigorists v. moderates). It also led to expressions of popular support as expressed in the 'acclamationes' for Liberius, and popular opposition as expressed in other 'acclamationes' and in the boycott of Felix. The keenness with which the people of Rome took part in religious debates is shown by their lynching of the soldier who blasphemed against providence, when they were still pagan under Maxentius, and the massacre of 137 (169 according to the Collectio Avellana I)

Ursinians in the Basilica of Sicininus (A.M. xxvii. 3.13), during the election of Pope Damasus.

c) Entertainments and Largesse

While riots over entertainment and largesse in the fourth century are not recorded, the people were still very keen on the circenses part of Juvenal's 'Panem et circenses'.[40] They were excited at the prospect of Games, and in 384 Symmachus in Relatio 6 asked the Emperor to carry out the promise of Games at Imperial expense (see Chapter 2, p.41) claiming their enthusiasm was due to loyalty to the Emperor, not greed. In other words the people were expecting a lot from Imperial Games, and they were likely to riot if the Games were not given.

By Relatio 9 Symmachus is able to send thanks to the Emperors for the Games. The Praetors and Quaestors had the duty of providing the annual Games and gladiatorial combats, and the insistence of laws on this subject shows that the Emperors took the need to keep the people happy very seriously (see chapter 5). As Games had to be arranged well in advance to get all the materials together, if a Senator defaulted on his duty the authorities would know well in advance and some sort of entertainment could be arranged, so that it is likely that the plebeians were never entirely disappointed, and so never protested about lack of Games.[41]

Riots over the lack of public Games may have always been avoided, but public feeling was often displayed in connection with them. The performers in public entertainments could cause trouble. To give one example, the first riot in the prefecture of Leontius in 355 that Ammianus mentions is the one over the arrest of the people's darling, Philoromus the charioteer (XV.7).

Another interesting example of the plebs' enthusiasm for performers is the fact that when the 'Peregrini' were expelled from Rome during a corn shortage, according to Ammianus (XIV.10.19), while the few who practised the liberal arts were all expelled, attendants of

mimes, and three thousand dancing girls, and an equal number of dancing masters were allowed to remain in the city, although Ammianus puts this passage in a criticism of the rich in Rome, so that he may be hinting at vested interests protecting their entertainers, rather than the city authorities fearing plebeian backlash.

Such demonstrations on behalf of performers took place outside the Games, but the place the people really showed their feelings both about performers, and matters totally unconnected, like religion, was at the Games, whether in the Circus (for chariot racing), the Theatre (for mimes, pantomimes, and Atellan farces, Roman Comedy having dwindled away in the Early Empire) or in the Amphitheatre (for Beast and Gladiatorial fights). The atmosphere of a football crowd is similar to the atmosphere of ancient audiences at the Games, and the people revelled in the anonymity of the crowd, becoming freer of speech, and showed the 'Dicacitas' that Ammianus says delighted Constantius (XVI.10).

The theatres in Rome were considerably smaller than the Colosseum and the Circus Maximus, and together probably held fewer than the Colosseum, which itself was only a fifth the estimated size of the Circus Maximus (50,000* : 250,000*) in seating capacity. Therefore the outbursts of the people in the theatres were not as important 'Acclamationes' as those in the Amphitheatre and Circus, not merely because of the smaller numbers involved, but because the theatres were small enough for an 'Acclamatio' to be rigged, but the other buildings were too large for this to be done easily, and for this reason the authorities allowed freedom of speech in the Circus, and the amphitheatre, so that they could get a reasonably true estimate of popular opinion, and they tolerated rather more uproar than they normally would.

Another contributory factor to the freedom of speech practised by the people at the Games was the need to let off steam. They could not afford the pleasures of the rich and needed somewhere to get their excitement, which was probably why Gladiatorial combat survived

*Balsdon: Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome (1969)

as long as it did. It gave a tremendous sense of significance to have the power of life and death over a man, and from this arose some of the people's self-confidence to speak freely at the Amphitheatre.[42] There was no less excitement at the Circus, because chariot racing was a dangerous sport, and the plebeians' enthusiasm for it went so far that Ammianus satirises plebeians who declared that the state would fall if their chariot failed to win the race:

> "Among whom those who have lived a good long time, more influential through their aged authority, often clamour by their white hairs and wrinkles that the state cannot stand, if in the coming race the team each backs does not leap first from the starting stalls, or with inauspicious horses rounds the turning post poorly held together."
>
> (XXVIII. 4.30)[43]

Apart from the matter of freedom of speech arising in such situations, the authorities did well to let the plebeians let off steam in the excitement of the races, rather than on the streets. In fact it would have been difficult to keep the plebs in order all the time. It was only worthwhile if dangerous levels of violence, which would lead to disaster, arose. The power of the atmosphere at the amphitheatre can be shown by the story of Augustine's friend, Alypius (Aug. Confessions 6.8), who arrived in Rome, and when asked by some friends to accompany them to a Gladiatorial combat determined to control himself, but when the moment came when the gladiator must be killed or spared, and he closed his eyes, the roar from the crowd caused him to open them again and he found himself shouting with the rest. He had lost his individuality in the crowd.

The relative popularity of the amphitheatre against circus is not easy to gauge in the fourth century. Ammianus makes no mention of plebeian enthusiasm for anything except chariot racing, but Prudentius, writing at the start of the fifth century, about the time that gladiatorial combat and similar amphitheatre entertainments were banned, says a lot against gladiatorial combats (Contra Symm.I. 379f, and in the later part

of Book II) implying that gladiators were still popular. This may not be a contradiction. According to J.P.V.D. Balsdon only a tenth of the Colosseum was open to the 'Plebs Frumentaria' (those receiving the Corn dole), so that it may be unsurprising that the Plebs that Ammianus satirises in XIV.6 and XXVIII.4 were keen on chariot racing, and showed little interest in gladiators.[44]

The subjects of 'Acclamationes' were many. They fall into two categories. On the one hand there were matters directly concerned with the entertainments themselves and the largesse concerned with them; on the other hand matters unconnected, either grievances, or announcements made, like the announcement that Liberius would be returned to Rome. Matters to do with the Games themselves could be demanding largesse for their favourite performers, even if they did not deserve it. Ammianus gives the example of Lampadius, who, when Praetor, was so irritated by the insistent demands of the people for rewards to be given to their favourites that he called some beggars from the Vatican, and gave the gifts to them, to get his own back at the plebs (XXVII. 3.6). According to Ammianus, actors, mimes etc. who failed to bribe the plebs in the theatre might be hissed off the stage (XXVIII. 4.32), and the third sort of uproar concerned with public shows was cheekiness. A passage of Ammianus (XXVII.4.33) describes the audience at spectacles of any kind barracking performers, judges, and even ladies with cries of 'Let them learn from you', though Ammianus cannot find anyone who can explain what it is they should learn.

These sorts of popular expression were not, of course, 'Acclamationes' properly speaking, of the sort that the Emperor wished to know. The 'Acclamationes' concerned matters not connected with the Games. The sorts of subjects that these might be about are as follows. Firstly there were demonstrations for and against people. Thus when Praetextatus died at the end of 384 there were 'Acclamationes' of grief and/or stupefaction. Actually, according to Symmachus, the 'Acclamationes'

were in the nature of a vote with the feet:

> "For when first the sad rumour (of Praetextatus' death) was heard in Rome, the people refused the festive pleasures of the theatre, and gave witness to his illustrious memory with many acclamations, taking the news with grief, because he had got them the favour of renowned Emperors."
>
> Rel. 10 [45]

He also mentions a straightforward 'acclamatio' there as well. Even Jerome, who contrasts Praetextatus burning in hell with the virgin Lea in heaven, has to admit the death of Praetextatus just before he was due to inaugurate his Ordinary (the one that would label the year) Consulship caused tremendous shock in the city.[46] Another example of a personal 'Acclamatio', unfavourable this time, was the rejection of Ursinus at the election of Damasus' successor, Siricius (see above).

There were also 'Acclamationes' about grievances, and the best example of this is the plebeians asking Constantius to restore Pope Liberius to them (C.A. I.3), and the 'Acclamatio' of joy on the news that their request was to be granted is an example of an 'Acclamatio' at an action by others. The plebs could also give 'Acclamationes' of regret for an action they have done:

> "The people's mood has changed for the better so that together they called for the punishment of the ringleaders and now the insolent dogs have bared their backs to the lash."
>
> Symm. Ep. II.38 about the exile of Symmachus' father [47]

> "I have been away for only a short time and the people have called for my return during theatrical Games."

- about Symmachus' own exile, and the fact that it was in the theatre may mean the 'Acclamatio' was rigged (Ep. VI.66.) [48]

d) *Injustice and attempts to tax*

What this section covers is misbehaviour by the authorities, and attempts by the central government to impose new burdens on the Populus Romanus. What it does not cover is corruption of the city's civil servants, which was probably so endemic that the people did not

regard it as a reason for rioting, only objecting to new burdens being placed on them. If they did riot about corrupt practice, there is no literary evidence, just the inference from some laws in the Theodosian Code, which show concern to avoid corruption, which would presumably cause riots, such as in matters to do with the corn supply. But more about that later; first we must consider injustice by the authorities in Rome.

There is only evidence of one Praefectus Urbi of the fourth century ever having been foolish enough to enrage the plebs by unjustly treating them. Other prefects of Rome may have come into disfavour for reasons beyond their control, an ex-prefect may have been chased from the city for refusing to sell his wine cheaply (Symmachus' father), but only Lampadius is attested to have actually set out to plunder from the people. To provide building materials for his building projects he requisitioned materials from tradesmen of the relevant trades, and this was fair enough practice, but then he refused to pay for the articles he had requisitioned, and it was this that sent a mob to his house intent on burning it down, and quite probably planning to tear him apart if he had not fled to the Milvian Bridge. The mob would probably not have been of unemployed plebeians, but of the next grade up, the minor tradesmen, who had sustained the losses, although doubtless some unemployed troublemakers came along for the ride (A.M. XXVII.3.8-10).

If Praefecti Urbi were usually more sensible than Lampadius the fourth century Emperors only once ever made the mistake of trying to impose regular direct tax on the People of Rome. In 306, Galerius sent Census-takers to Rome to enroll the people of the city in the empire-wide census which had been started in Diocletian's reign to put taxation on a more equitable basis. The result of sending the census-takers to Rome was the Revolt of Maxentius, son of the Emperor Maximian (286-305), who had been passed over in the Imperial Succession, as had Constantine, who also got himself proclaimed Emperor in 306. Neither

the account of Lactantius (De Mortibus Persecutorum 26) or that of Zosimus (Historia Nova II.9) mention explicit involvement of the people in the revolt, but Lactantius attributes the revolt to the sending of the census-takers, as well as the removal of a large part of the Praetorian Guard. It was the remainder of the Guard that proclaimed Maxentius, bribed to do so, according to Zosimus. However, self interest by the Praetorians, who did not wish to be transferred from the comforts of Rome, may have meant that they did not need too much persuasion from Maxentius.

More important is the part or lack of a part of the people. Lactantius says the people enthusiastically supported the revolt. He does not say whether that support was active, or not, but even passive support would be important. The plebs could probably have opposed the revolt, since the Praetorians had probably been reduced to numbers too small to prevail in the face of opposition, but with popular support no one could resist the revolt of Maxentius in Rome. No Emperor made the same mistake again, and in the East some urban populations, which had been included in the general census, were given exemption from tax, by Maximin Daia, one of the Eastern Emperors and rival of Licinius in 312/3 (Lactantius 36.1).

Granting exemption from tax to urban populations was obviously so useful an instrument of policy for usurpers that no legitimate Emperor would dare to try to include urban populations in regular direct taxation, and provide a usurper with a means of getting popular support. The people of Rome may have opposed regular annual poll tax, but there seems to have been no objection to Constantine's lustral (five-yearly) tax in gold and silver on tradesmen. This was probably because tradesmen could pay the tax, by putting their prices up a little, but a poll tax hits everyone, even the unemployed, who cannot pay it, and is consequently intolerable for large urban centres like fourth century Rome.

There is also the question of tradition. For hundreds of years the Plebs of Rome had not had to pay direct tax, but it had paid indirect taxes. The people could regard the lustral tax as an indirect tax, on those who had a chance of affording it, but they could not regard Galerius' attempt to impose the poll tax as anything but an attack on them.

e) Other

Besides the four main causes of riots listed above for which there is plenty or at least more than minimal evidence, there are also a few causes of public disturbance, which are unusual, or for which there is very little evidence in the fourth century. An example of this is the collapse of buildings. The only evidence we have for this is a letter of Symmachus:

> "There is little to write of public affairs except that in the Square of Trajan the collapse of an apartment block has crushed the occupants; this so turned popular feeling to the destruction of the prefect's carriage that it now has a private owner."
>
> (Ep. VI.37)[49]

This collapse of a building did indeed cause a riot, but it is difficult to tell how frequent such collapses were by the fourth century. In the second century Juvenal had said: "nos urbem colimus tenui tibicine fultam magna parte sui; nam sic labentibus obstat vilicus et, veteris rimae cum texit hiatum, securos pendente iubet dormire ruina " (Sat. III. 193/4). Why should this have changed? It may not have. However, a few factors may have changed since then. The population may have dropped since the second century, causing less pressure on the housing market, and giving less opportunity for jerry-building. Another factor that might have changed was the frequency of fires in the City. While people still tried to avoid the fire regulations, so that prefects occasionally had to demolish the balconies and lean-tos that impinged on the regulation minimum distance between buildings, as for example Praetextatus (A.M. XXVII. 9.10), even two and a half centuries after Nero

the authorities realised their importance, as the example of Praetextatus shows. The importance of fires was that even if they did not destroy a building, they could seriously weaken its structure. Travertine stone crumbles in the conditions of a fire,[50] and one of the factors which reduced collapses after the Great Fire of 64 was the use of brick faced concrete for the lower storeys of buildings. Another factor in fire prevention (and consequently of reducing the number of collapsing buildings) by the fourth century, was the bread distribution taking the place of the corn distributions in the third century. This reduced the amount of cooking that the poor had to do at home, where the people had to use stoves for cooking, because there were no chimneys in the 'Insulae' for them to use other means of cooking. These stoves would probably set a tenement block on fire easily. The lack of mention of both fire (only Ammianus and Zosimus mention them at Rome and in both cases in connection with temples catching fire)[51] - and collapse of buildings (Symmachus is the only fourth century author to mention them - see above) may merely mean that there were few significant cases of either that were worth mentioning (a Theodosian Code law does make provision for the rebuilding of buildings that have collapsed without recourse to imperial permission, as was the case with new buildings - C.Th.XVI.19), but it may mean that there were actually fewer fires and building collapses in the fourth century. One or two 'insulae' at Rome were sturdy enough to survive into the twentieth century, encased in other buildings[52], and substantial remains of 'insulae' are still standing at Ostia.

Fire and Building Collapse are causes for popular disturbance that have little evidence in the fourth century to show they were persisting, which they undoubtedly were. Flood was another possible cause of Riot, but there is only one flood at Rome recorded that century, and that does not appear to have caused a riot (A.M. XXIX.6 17-18). Let us now turn to unusual incidents causing popular disturbance in the fourth

century.

These unusual incidents might be labelled as political incidents, and concerned the Emperor, or at least the Imperial throne. In the second century, Juvenal said of the plebeians, at a time when the Emperors lived in Rome and so still looked for popular support:

> "Long since, now that we have no votes to sell, they shoved off their cares; for the people that used to give military power, the Fasces, legions, everything, now hold their peace and desire only two things: bread and circus games."
>
> Sat. 10. 77ff.[53]

In the fourth century the Emperor was an absolute monarch, and lived away from Rome, no longer needing the support of the Plebs Romana, so we should expect Juvenal's comments to apply even more; but we have already seen that the people cared about their religion in the fourth century, and they were not averse to showing their political feelings when the Emperor was visiting the City, or if there was a usurpation based on Rome. Thus, in the former cases, they cheered Constantine when he liberated Rome in 312[54] and in 389, according to Claudian[55] Theodosius, having just conquered the usurper Magnus Maximus, visited Rome, and got on well with the people, but in 326, when Constantine had executed his eldest son, Crispus, just before a visit to Rome to celebrate his Vicennalia, he had such an uncomfortable reception in the city that he never returned. It may be that the reception was connected with the pagan/Christian debate, but while Zosimus placed his refusal to mount the Capitol in 326, it is more likely that this happened in 315,[56] so that feelings would have had ten years to cool down. It seems more likely that the uncomfortable reception that Constantine got in 326 was over the Crispus/Fausta affair. Another interesting 'political' act involving the people of Rome was Stilicho handing over the supporters of Gildo in 398 to the Senate and People of Rome to judge, the first time in centuries that the people had been given say in a law case. It was a totally

anachronistic action on Stilicho's part, and was in fact political. He was in a shaky position as semi-barbarian regent for the Emperor Honorius, and he wished to shift any odium for condemning Gildo's supporters to the Senate and People of Rome, who were only too willing to oblige Stilicho, having suffered at Gildo's hands.

In the case of popular reaction to fourth century usurpations starting at Rome, the position is confused. There are two such usurpations, the revolt of Maxentius, and the revolt of Nepotianus against Magnentius. In the former case the people of Rome supported the revolt for reasons other than political, but there may have been some feeling for Maxentius because he had been passed over in the Imperial succession, and gratitude for saving them from the census-takers may have buoyed Maxentius up when he bribed the armies sent against him (by Severus the Tetrarch) from behind the high walls of Rome. Even after he turned the Praetorians on the plebs during a corn riot (see above, section 'a'), they tolerated him, until the invasion of Italy by Constantine, when they took the very political act of rioting when Maxentius showed signs of trying to play the waiting game he had successfully played against Severus and Galerius. They were tired of being under siege and wanted a result. If Maxentius beat Constantine, and thereby gained the western provinces of the Empire, with their resources, and ended that siege, they would be happy. If Constantine won, they would be happy, but they wanted to cease being a football of imperial politics.

The opinions of the people about Maxentius were fairly unanimous and not especially hostile. They just wanted to return to living in a privileged backwater, with those in charge looking to see that they got all their amenities. They did have political feelings, if only the wish not to be involved. But the revolt of Julius Nepotianus seems to show that the Plebs did have some political divisions, but there is so little information about the whole episode that it is

impossible to decide how political the divisions were. In 350, Magnentius overthrew the Emperor, Constans, and some leading Senators, who had served as Praetorian and City Prefects earlier in Constans' reign, brought the Senate over to him, and with it Rome. A few months later Julius Nepotianus, a nephew of Constantine, took advantage of the confusion into which the western provinces had been thrown by the overthrow of Constans, to try and stage a usurpation in Italy. The two accounts of the usurpation differ. Zosimus (II.43) says that Nepotianus gathered together "a mob of lawless men, who had abandoned themselves to brigandage and vagrancy, and approached Rome." Magnentius' Praetorian Prefect, Anicetus, armed some of the plebs and led them out to face the invader. The Romans were defeated, and, because the City Prefect had closed the gates of the city to save it when he saw them flee, they were slaughtered. Aurelius Victor's account is different, and implies that Nepotianus was at Rome when he attempted his usurpation:

> "Meanwhile at Rome, partly because he had bought the Plebs, partly because they hated Magnentius, Nepotianus, a relative of the family of Constantine through his mother, rose up, arming a band of gladiators, and killing the Prefect of the City,* and became Emperor. His crude nature was such a cause of doom to plebeian and patrician alike that everywhere homes, market-places, streets and temples flowed with blood and were as full of corpses as a cemetery."
>
> 42. 6-7 [57]

Zosimus makes it seem as if the revolt involves an outside attack on the city. Perhaps his brigands are Victor's band of Gladiators, but the people play much more part in the Victor account. The carnage is set-piece literary description, as in Tacitus Histories III.83, but Ammianus introduces his passage on the Maximinus massacre of Senators by the words 'anno sexto decimo et eo diutius post Nepotiani exitium, saeviens per urbem aeternam, urebat cuncta Bellona", so a massacre did happen. Victor distinguishes between the 'vulgus'

*Aurelius Victor mistaken here - should be praetorian prefect - see A. Chastagnol Fastes... (1962) p.110.

and the 'plebs Romana', which suffers in the massacre, the usual 'them' to 'us' categories, but it is not possible to guess who of the plebs supported Nepotianus and who did not. It is perhaps significant that Nepotianus was of the family of Constantine. This may represent the 'vulgus' as having a loyalty to the Imperial dynasty. The Plebeians who suffered may have been clients of the pro-Magnentian Senators. The revolt of Nepotianus happened only three or four months after the overthrow of Constans, so that for Magnentius to have earned the hatred of the plebs on his own account there was not time. It would seem more likely that it was a matter of dynastic loyalty, that the plebs hated him. It is possible that Constans was popular with the Plebs. According to Chastagnol (Fastes...) the two Prefects of the City, who were also Praetorian Prefects, who served Constans before the revolt of Magnentius, were senators of Constantinople. This must indicate bad relations with the Senate. In the early Empire, the Plebs had loved Emperors like Nero, who humiliated Senators.[58] The blustering nobles that Ammianus satirises in XIV.6 and XXVIII.4 probably endeared themselves no more than their ancestors to the people who were their clients. Even if Nepotianus' gladiators did a lot of the massacring, it is unlikely that all the plebs held back.

Those were the causes of public disturbances in fourth century Rome. Let us see whether similar causes were active in other times, and other places.

III. Fourth century disturbances in other cities and earlier disturbances at Rome

a) Fourth century disturbances in other cities.

To put the situation at Rome in context it is now necessary to compare the causes of rioting in Rome with the causes of rioting in other conurbations of the Roman world, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople. Carthage, the second city of the Western Empire, was

also a conurbation but there is little record of what its populace was like in the fourth century compared with the other cities. Ammianus mentions a Proconsul of Africa selling the Carthaginians corn intended for Rome because they were exhausted by famine (A.M. XXVIII.1.17) but does not mention any public disturbances in connection with this episode, and problems such as Romanus (on whom Ammianus places much of the blame for Africa's ills during Valentinian I's reign), Donatist 'circumcelliones', and tribal revolt, tended to affect the whole of North Africa rather than just Carthage and the province of 'Africa'. Consequently we must concentrate on the three major cities of the East to draw any comparisons with Rome.

As far as causes of riots are concerned the city which most resembled Rome was Antioch, even after Constantinople became the second capital of the Empire with privileges similar to Rome. Fourth century riots at Constantinople and Alexandria tended to be over religious issues, but Antioch, like Rome, had political riots and famine riots. To illustrate this more clearly let us examine which causes of disturbance at Rome also applied in the other three cities in the order in which they were covered in the first part of this chapter, namely, Famine, Religion, Entertainment, and Injustice and politics.

1) Famine

Egypt, of which Alexandria was a part, and on which Constantinople relied for its grain supply, was a steady and abundant corn producer.[59] Consequently, during the fourth century, any difficulties Alexandria and Constantinople had with their corn supply were not due to crop failures. Indeed Alexandria was only affected by politics, while Constantinople could only be affected by politics or logistical problems. In 355 Constantius II threatened to cut off the bread supply to the citizens of Alexandria if they continued to support Athanasius, their orthodox bishop, and Constantinople actually was punished by, in one case, the halving of the bread dole, and in a second, by the total

suspension of the distributions for a day. The first case was, under Constantius II[60], following the murder of the 'Magister Equitum' Hermogenes who had been sent to quell rioting between Christian factions in the city in 342. The second case was the result of the lynching of a Goth during the reign of Theodosius.[61] Another political event which may have caused the people of the eastern capital to lack corn was the attempted usurpation of Procopius in 365-6. Themistius in a discourse to Valens, the Emperor who suppressed Procopius,[62] seems to imply that Procopius stopped the distributions at Constantinople, and given that the usurper had little influence away from Constantinople it is likely that he was unsure of his corn supply and unwilling to distribute it.

Logistical problems were the other cause of Constantinople facing conditions of famine. Sopater, a pagan friend and adviser of Constantine, was executed in the face of accusations that he had been using magic to fetter the winds and cause a famine[63]. In 409, a shortage was caused by a lack of ships to carry the corn to the city.[64]

In contrast to Alexandria and Constantinople, Antioch did suffer from famines due to crop failure, and also speculation by some of its more unscrupulous citizens, and these famines occasioned rioting. In 354 Gallus, whom Constantius II had appointed as a junior emperor to govern the East in his absence, caused Theophilus, the governor of Syria (based in Antioch), to be torn apart by a mob when during a famine there he shifted the blame for the plight of the locals on to the unfortunate governor with a remark implying that Theophilus deliberately caused the famine.[65]

Nine years later another food shortage in Antioch was aggravated because the emperor Julian had chosen to muster the forces for his Persian Expedition there[66]. Julian found his stay in Antioch extremely disappointing. He had expected to find a city full of pagan Hellenists like Libanius, but found a largely Christian city where the temples were neglected, and a populace and aristocracy that became less and less

friendly the longer he stayed. When he returned from visiting Daphne, a suburb of the city, he was met by a popular demonstration about the food shortages, and his efforts to keep prices down by means of a maximum limit only served to drive grain off the market and embitter the local landowners against him.

In 382 there was a famine which led to the bakers having a difficult time. At first a local senate was the focus of popular resentment. Then corn was demanded from neighbouring areas, but the price of bread continued to rise. The Count of the Orient then intervened, asking the bakers to cut their prices; but they did not, and the Count became the object of abuse, so that he then ordered the bakers seized and beaten. The orator Libanius intervened on behalf of the bakers and saved them from further seizures.[67]

Two or three years later another famine led to threats to burn down the houses of Libanius and his supporters. Harsh orders from the Count of the East led to the bakers' stopping production and fleeing to the hills outside the city. The wealthier citizens also left and in Antioch the strong fought and the weak starved. Stability only returned after Libanius intervened with the Count of the East to have the orders against the bakers repealed, and they returned home.[68]

There is a contrast to Rome in the relations between the plebeians and the respective Senates of the two cities. In Antioch during famines popular feeling was vented against the whole upper class, whereas at Rome it was focused on individuals, Symmachus the Elder because he was rumoured to have said that he would rather use his wine to make concrete for fishponds, and Symmachus the Younger for persuading the Senate to declare Gildo, who controlled Africa, and thus the corn supply, a public enemy. Perhaps the responsibility of senatorial families to see to the holding of Games, in which they could make themselves popular, reduced ill feeling between rich and poor at Rome, while at Antioch the aristocrats

could not ease tensions in the same way, since Emperors kept less control on spending on Games at Rome by aristocrats than elsewhere (see Chapter 5).

ii) Religion

In respect of religious disturbances the area most similar to Rome was Africa, and the city most unlike Rome was Alexandria. Rome and Africa both suffered from disputes over the surrender of scripture to the authorities during the persecution of Diocletian. The bishops of Rome and Carthage had allowed this to happen, and when Christianity was legitimised by Maxentius in Rome and Constantine in the Empire in general the factions of those who had stood firm and those who had compromised over the surrender of scripture bitterly disputed the succession in these sees. In Rome the problem was resolved by the time Constantine defeated Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in 312. In Africa, however, even arbitration by Constantine himself could not resolve the dispute and the rigorist Donatists broke away from the church. Bands of 'circumcelliones' arose from the more militant Donatists and attacked church property in Africa, and continued to be a nuisance for the rest of Roman rule in the North Africa.

Fortunately for the West the Latin language did not allow the full importance of the Arian heresy to be apparent, so that it was spared from the controversy which tore the eastern church apart and led to riots in Alexandria, Constantinople, and, to a lesser extent, Antioch. Rome's involvement through the exile of Liberius, was more due to Liberius' stand on church-state relations than any appreciation by the western churchmen of the Arian-Orthodox controversy.

During the fourth century Antioch only suffered from the Arian serious conflict on one occasion, in 328, when the people were divided between the deposed bishop Eustathius and Eusebius to the point of violence until Eusebius' refusal of the bishopric defused the tensions.[69] Alexandria's experience of the Arian/Orthodox controversy was centred on three persons. First of all there was Arius himself, who started his heresy

in Egypt, and after his death came the running dispute between the orthodox bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, and the moderately Arian emperor, Constantius II. Athanasius was exiled in 338, and on his return in 346 the people of Alexandria demonstrated their favour to him, particularly because the Arian bishop Gregory had used intimidation against the orthodox to promote his own creed. In 355 Constantius again drove Athanasius into exile but met much more resistance than before. He sent two civil servants (Notarii) to Alexandria with instructions for the military commander and a letter ordering the people to drive their bishop out of the city, or be considered enemies of the Emperor. The 'Notarii' failed in their task and there was a military attack on one of the main churches of Alexandria before the 'populus' could reply and Athanasius had to go into hiding. It was Constantius' attempt to get the bishops of East and West to support his condemnation of Athanasius at this time that brought him into conflict with Pope Liberius[70]. He sent a second letter to Alexandria threatening to cut off the bread supply and (involving the pagans in a Christian dispute) overturn the idols if Athanasius was not surrendered to the authorities. Possibly to encourage the Christians to obey, possibly overzealously, one of the Notaries with the assistance of the Prefect of Egypt incited the pagans to attack a Christian church.

One can note here the contrast with the expulsion of Pope Liberius from Rome which was carried out far more discreetly and with far more care not to cause factional fighting in Rome. However this is only a minor difference between the religious riots and disturbances in the cities of Alexandria and Rome. For the rest of the century Alexandria was affected by Pagan-Christian riots whereas no record has come down of such riots in fourth century Rome, and Constantinople and Antioch (except for the demonstrations against Julian the Apostate, which were also caused by other factors) were also free of Pagan-Christian rioting.

Before looking at the Pagan-Christian riots of Alexandria it would be as well to look at the effects of the Arian heresy on Constantinople and complete the survey of the riots connected with the controversy. Constantinople, as Eastern capital, was more affected by disturbances connected with Arianism and Orthodoxy than even Alexandria, where the last riots about the matter were a factor in the decision of Valens, another Arian Emperor, to withdraw his order for the exile of Athanasius that he had issued on coming to power in 364. Constantinople first suffered riots on the subject when Arius himself came to the city in 336. The bishop of Constantinople refused to greet him and there were clashes which were put to an end by the sudden death of the heresiarch.

Two years later the see became vacant and there were riots at the episcopal elections following which the orthodox leader Paul was exiled and the Arian Eusebius of Nicomedia became bishop. The fact that Constantinople was in the part of the Empire that Constantius II inherited from Constantine explains the choice of the Arian.

In 342 another election led to more riots, this time between Paul's supporters and the supporters of the Arian Macedonius. This led to Constantius sending in Hermogenes who was murdered with the results mentioned on page 78, Constantius came to the city and restored order with no more loss of life, exiling Paul to Emesa but not making Macedonius bishop[71]. Paul was allowed to return to Constantinople in 344 but there were more clashes and he was exiled again in 345. Macedonius was now consecrated bishop, but in establishing his authority 3150 lives were lost, a number which makes the hundreds killed in Rome during the Damasus-Ursinus riots pale into insignificance, and shows how comparatively moderate the people of Rome were in religious affairs. This massacre, however, was not the last of the woes that Macedonius brought upon the city. In 359 he had the audacity to try to move the bones of Constantine to an Arian church. There was a riot in which several people were killed,

and Constantius II, although himself an Arian, was offended by Macedonius' impiety to his father, such that he deposed and banished the miscreant bishop[72].

In 370 Eudoxius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople died, and the Emperor Valens felt it necessary to station troops in the city when he exiled the orthodox bishop[73]. By the end of the century orthodoxy had prevailed, except that the Goths had been converted to an Arian form of Christianity, and this increased ill feeling between the citizens of Constantinople and Gothic federates in the Roman Army during Theodosius I's reign (A.D. 379-395). Libanius mentions the murder of a Gothic soldier, who was lynched by the people of the city and thrown in the sea (see note 61). Constantinople was not troubled by the strife of Christian factions again until the following century and the rise of Monophysitism.

It is now necessary to return to riots between Christians and non-Christians. The Jews were involved in a riot in the early fifth century, which had been stirred up by dancers[74] at Alexandria, and there may have been a riot at Constantinople in 395 or 396 in which a synagogue was burnt down after Christian complaints about its construction were ignored by a pagan Prefect of Constantinople, but otherwise they were not the recorded victims or inciters of riots in the great urban centres either in the East or the West (Rome as mentioned earlier only had one serious anti-semitic disturbance in the fourth century).

The issue of Christianity versus Paganism spilt little blood in Rome, Constantinople or Antioch after the end of the Great Persecution (305 in the West where it had never been pursued with full vigour, and 314 in the East with the defeat of Maximin II Daia). Constantinople was founded as a largely Christian city; Antioch was used as an imperial capital by Constantius II in his Persian Wars, and was an early home of Christianity, so that the fashion of taking the Emperor's faith and

the long tradition of Christianity mean that it is unsurprising that in 362 Julian found a city which neglected the old gods - Christians were too dominant for pagans to riot, or for Christians to worry about paganism so as to riot about it; Rome was also free from Pagan-Christian riots possibly because of the influence of the Senatorial class which even though split between Pagans and Christians held together - Pope Damasus defended the pagan Prefect of the City Symmachus against charges of persecuting Christians. Social alignments at Rome were stronger than religious differences. Alexandria however was not blessed with such moderating influences.

The Arian bishop George who replaced Athanasius after the events of 355 was killed by a pagan mob early in the reign of Julian after some Christians had mocked some pagan relics found in the remains of a temple that had been pulled down. Such was the hatred of the orthodox Christians for him that no one made any attempt to save him[75]. In 387 when Cynegius, Praetorian Prefect of the East, shut down the temples and ended pagan festivals, there may have been demonstrations against the regime of Theodosius I[76] even going so far as to openly support the western usurper Magnus Maximus. Four years later following a similar incident to that which caused the riot in which George was murdered there was a civil war in the city in which the Pagans made the Temple of Serapis their headquarters and executed Christian prisoners for refusal to sacrifice. Theodosius intervened, putting down the revolt, sparing all parties and ordering the Temples razed to the ground.[77]

iii) Entertainments.

As in Rome, in the East entertainment was a focus for demonstrations of popular feeling, especially as the government used acclamations concerning governors and officials to assess their performance. Although the circus factions of Byzantium were a thing of later centuries, in the fourth century the ingredients of active violence were coming

together. First of all interest in chariot racing was increasing in the East as interest in the Gymnasium and gladiators declined[78]. Secondly the chariot races in the Hippodrome at Constantinople were already arousing passions by the time the Expositio Totius Mundi was written in the 350's:

> "And there the Circus Games are watched most savagely indeed (with pernicious and violent contention)".
>
> E.T.M. 50 [79]

The element that had still to be introduced to turn the circus crowd of the Expositio into the violent factions of the Byzantine Empire was also present in the fourth century, but not in chariot racing, where the four factions of Constantinople were the same peaceful racing stable organisations that Rome herself had. The missing element was the claquer, who could influence those gathered for a spectacle to praise or to decry in their acclamations whether they really wished to or not. The claquers of the fourth century were active in the theatre, where it was much easier to dominate an audience than in massive buildings like the Hippodromes of Constantinople, or Antioch, or the Circus Maximus in Rome. They originated as the paid supporters of the 'Pantomimi' (virtuoso actors) who could influence audiences to applaud or to jeer (if they were not paid enough). The imperial interest in acclamations of local officials gave these claquers the power to blackmail officials and made claquers into popular leaders.[80]

The prime example of a demonstration involving theatrical claquers is the 'Riot of the Statues' in Antioch in 387. Although its motivation was unconnected with the world of the Games, it was to the claquers that the 'curiales' (town councillor class) turned when they wished to stage a popular demonstration against a new tax burden being imposed by Theodosius. The demonstration in fact became uncontrollable and the statues of the Imperial family were overturned, but the use of

claquers to arouse the people foreshadows the factions of the Byzantine world[81]. The inclusion of other entertainments in the faction system, including the theatre, as the Empire took over responsibility for providing entertainments from the local authorities, brought the claquers into the factions and led to the developments at Constantinople[82].

There were riots about the circus in other places than Rome, the one at Thessalonika in 390, in which the leader of the garrison was murdered when he had a charioteer arrested, and which led to the massacre, being an important example. However, the majority of disturbances at Games in Rome and the East were about other matters, political and religious.

iv) Politics and Injustice.

The politics of the Empire at large did not often spur the plebeians of any of the great cities of the Empire to riot. In the East there were riots at Constantinople (when a rumour suggested that Theodosius had lost a battle against the western usurper Magnus Maximus in the late 380s) and Alexandria (in favour of Maximus) of a political nature, though the latter may have religious connotations.[83] In 378 the people of Constantinople demanded arms to protect the city, in the event of Valens losing the war against the Goths, but Valens was furious at their lack of confidence in him, and refused; his defeat at Adrianople left the city exposed to attack.[84] In 400 the Goth Gainas, wishing to have the same status in the East as the regent Stilicho in the West, staged a Coup d'Etat in Constantinople and occupied Constantinople with his 'Federate' troops (barbarian units of the Roman army commanded by barbarians). In a manner reminiscent of the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome, when Gainas was outside the city the citizens shut the gates, and disposed of his supporters within the walls, thwarting his ambitions.[85]

The usurpation of Procopius at Constantinople provides a parallel to the usurpation of Maxentius at Rome. The people, according to Ammianus, were indifferent to Procopius but gave him some support because of the depradations of Valens' uncle Petronius which were souring relations between the legitimate Emperor and the citizens. Dynastic sentiment also played its part in both cases. Maxentius played on his grievance at being passed over in the succession to the tetrarchy although the son of the Emperor Maximian, and Procopius used the infant daughter of Constantius II to remind the people of the relationship between himself and the Constantinian dynasty.[86]

The citizens of Antioch did not emerge from their most significant political riot, the Riot of the Statues of 387, with credit compared to those of Constantinople in the incidents outlined above. The Byzantines showed concern for their city or at least apathy. The Antiochenes openly committed high treason by overturning the Emperor's statue when their protest against a tax imposition got out of control.

Both in Rome and the major cities of the East the people were not politically conscious, and their political disturbances were responses to injustice or demonstrations of loyalty to the Emperors and their dynasties.

To conclude this section on the causes of riots in other fourth century cities, Rome shared the problems which caused riots with the other great cities of the time, but local factors in each city decided what factor would cause most disturbances and also the ferocity of violence involved. Thus Rome and Antioch were particularly involved in the Arian/Orthodox dispute. The factors that made Rome peculiar to itself in the range of riot causes, and the intensity of violence (or rather lack of intensity) become apparent by comparison to the other cities. Social ties were very strong in Rome, strong enough to overcome

religious differences between Christians and Pagans and spare the city from the riots that afflicted Alexandria. The absence of monks and others independent of social patronage also helped Rome, because the social ties that united the upper class pagans and Christians could influence the lower classes into not settling differences by riot, unlike Alexandria. The fact that the aristocracy in Rome was landed, and not terribly interested in imperial posts (compared to the Antiochenes, despite Libanius' efforts), made that aristocracy stable and gave it the time to develop its social prestige by means of the Patron/Client relationship. This gave it much greater influence over the lower classes than the merchant aristocracy of Antioch had over its plebeians, and made it more popular than the Antiochene nobles at the same time. Thus the Antiochenes showed more enmity to their leaders in time of famine than the Romans showed to the senatorial class in similar circumstances. The Constantinopolitan senators were too new a class in the fourth century to have the power of their Roman counterparts. Another factor that spared Rome from the worst excesses of religious riots between Christian sects was a lack of interest in doctrinal disputes on the part of the populace. Part of this may have been due to the fact that Latin was a less precise language than Greek at the time, and the Orthodox/Arian dispute over the Nicene Creed turned on the distinction between two words of Greek that Latin used the same word for in translation (so that Latin speakers could not follow the causes of Arianism or Orthodoxy with the passion of Greek speakers, because they could not understand what was under dispute).

Rome was a political prize in the imperial politics of the fourth century; more so than Alexandria or Antioch, but less than Constantinople. This was because Constantinople was a strategic prize in its own right, whereas the other three cities would not affect the defence of the whole Empire if lost. Rome excelled the other two because it was the seat of the Senate, and western usurpers would turn to that body for moral

support, but the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410 indicates that it was unimportant militarily, since the central administration of the Empire was no longer concentrated in the city, and the Empire survived for another half century. This importance determined which cities were likely to be the centres for usurpation attempts, and therefore political disturbances.

b) Earlier Disturbances at Rome

Comparing the violence of fourth century Rome and its causes with violence in the city in earlier periods is not easy. To begin with, there is no source comparable to Ammianus Marcellinus, chronicling each Prefect of the City's tenure of office and mentioning any riots that took place regardless of their political significance (or insignificance). Then there is the matter of whether one can compare the violence of the fourth century to that of the Late Republic and say which was more serious when the only superficial similarity between the periods is the absence of a Praetorian Guard to crush the riots. The violence of the 50's B.C. for example was caused by politicans such as Clodius, Caesar, Pompey and Crassus struggling for power, and using mobs not necessarily composed of the ordinary urban plebeians, whereas the riots of the 350's A.D. were caused by shortages and the arrest of a charioteer. While it is true that the people of the Republic complained about shortages and other afflictions, it is also the case that such grievances were aggravated by politicans for their own ends. Therefore this section of the chapter must assess the deterrent effect of the Praetorian Guard under the Empire and raise the question of whether other factors, such as the assured supply of corn in the pre-Constantinian period made that a more peaceful time for the city than the late fourth century. Although there is no counterpart to Ammianus for the Early Empire, Dio Cassius and Herodian do mention plebeian reactions to various events from the reign of Commodus to the accession of Gordian III in 238; so let us

compare this period to the fourth century and draw conclusions from it, with a few excursions to other periods for points not covered in the comparison.

In the period covered by Herodian and Dio there were no disturbances over natural corn famines and it is necessary to go back to the Julio-Claudians to find a spectacular riot, with a mob pelting Claudius with bread in the Forum.[87] However, it is interesting to note that the first (unsuccessful) attempt to overthrow Pertinax was made when he was at the coast inspecting the arrangements for the corn supply. Even in times of plenty the authorities had to ensure all was well.

Religion also caused little trouble at the turn of the third century. This is unlikely to be due to the presence of troops, since there were troops in Constantinople during the fourth century religious riots. It is more likely to have been due to the absence of christian disputes, the pagans being fairly tolerant of each other. There was some religious feeling, and when Maximinus Thrax was plundering the 'annona' and the ornaments from public buildings to raise funds for his campaigns on the Rhine/Danube frontier the people mounted a guard on the city's temples to protect them.[88] Earlier in 217/218 the populace ignored the claims to the purple of Macrinus while at the Games and acclaimed Jupiter as their Augustus, while senators and Equites had to support the new regime.[89] Neither author records the plebeian reaction to Elagabalus' religious experiments.

Although religious rivalry caused no difficulties in the Early Empire the loyalties of the plebeians were already there, concentrating on Emperors rather than Bishops of Rome. Despite the prejudices of the Roman upper class about the capriciousness of the mob in Rome, the plebeians were fairly consistent in their favourites,[90] though a bad Emperor could offend them and turn support to hate. Thus Commodus and

the sons of Severus were cheered on their first entries into the city, but by the end of their reigns Commodus and Caracalla were both feared and hated. Dio says that at the end of Commodus' reign, while the senatorial class had to attend the gladiatorial displays of the Emperor, the more anonymous plebeians were avoiding the ampitheatre in fear of him,[91] and for fear of a disturbance the ashes of Caracalla[91] had to be smuggled into the tomb of the Antonine Emperors by night (compare the abduction of Liberius in the fourth century).[92]

Dynastic loyalty was quite important, so that the two Emperors mentioned just above had actively to harm the plebs to alienate it, and in the case of Commodus, the people were ready to blame all their ills in the early part of the reign on Cleander, his unpopular minister, rather than blame the Emperor[93]. The people forced the Senate to choose Gordian III as well as its own candidates from a sort of dynastic loyalty.[94] The first two Gordians had started the revolt against Maximinus Thrax, even if they had been defeated, and this may have prompted Plebeians to demand recognition of the surviving member of their family. They may also have had an eye to the African corn supply, but since Maximinus' supporters had crushed the African revolt by the time of the proclamation of Maximus, Balbinus, and Gordian III, this seems unlikely. An interesting loyalty they displayed was to Pertinax. He may have won their loyalty by being a good City Prefect; it has already been noted that he inspected the corn supply arrangements at Ostia, so that he may have won it this way. However, Pertinax had worked his way from the bottom of society to the top, and it may be that he embodied plebeian hopes. He was from a freedman background and even if he did not come from among the plebeians of Rome he had much more in common with them than the grim Maximinus Thrax, the next Emperor from a lowly origin, who although never visiting Rome earned plebeian hatred, such that on the latter's overthrow statues, pictures, and honorific dedications were torn down and the agents of his brutality were lynched.[95] With Pertinax, on

the other hand, they sought his murderers in revenge, and they had supported his accession as well. Commodus' assassins took advantage of the Saturnalia when the Praetorians were unarmed, and the people also used these circumstances to force the Guard to accept Pertinax. They crowded into the Camp and hemmed in the unarmed soldiers so that they could not rearm or raise a counter-cry against Pertinax.

The circus was the outlet of popular opinion long before the fourth century[96]. After the auction of the Empire to Didius Julianus the people took themselves off to the Circus Maximus and called on Pescennius Niger, the governor of Syria, to come and save them.[97] It was at the Circus that the people claimed that Jupiter was their Augustus rather than Macrinus (see note 89). Herodian compares the rush of the populace to the Circus after the defeat of Maximinus Thrax to a rush to a political assembly.[98] The Circus was also where the people protested against the civil war between Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus[99]. However, the most spectacular example of a popular demonstration at the Circus came in Commodus' reign. A woman appeared in the Circus and blamed a corn shortage engineered by the Praefectus Annonae, on the Emperor's favourite Cleander. There was a march on the palace and the Emperor gave them Cleander's head. However, although the Circus was an outlet for popular feeling, Dio and Herodian, in the period they cover together, mention no riots about the arrest of charioteers and similar 'vilitates', as Ammianus would have called such events. This may mean that the populace was more docile than in the fourth century, or that Dio and Herodian thought them unworthy of mention unless they involved politics, or that the Praetorian Guard was an effective deterrent. The silence of sources before the fourth century on matters of this kind makes it difficult to put the fourth century populace's activities into context.

The effect of politics and injustice on the behavour of the people of Rome in the Severan period is also difficult to judge. The

presence of the Emperor in Rome tended to add a political aspect to popular demonstrations which, as has been seen earlier, really foreshadowed loyalty to bishops of Rome in the fourth century, as opposed to favour of the Emperor as politician; they were interested in personalities, not issues. As in the fourth century the plebeians did not initiate political crisis, but did influence them, and react to them. They aired their grievances and their approval to the Emperor as the highest authority, but did not seek power for themselves. Political events, not political ambition, caused their demonstrations, so that it is hazardous to talk of political riots happening in the early third century but not in the fourth. Both here and in the early part of this chapter therefore politics as a cause of disturbances means the people being caught up in the political crises of their day (whether the fall of Pertinax or the revolt of Maxentius) not revolutionary causes, stirring the proletariat. In the Herodian/Dio period the Praetorian Guard seems to have had a deterrent effect on disturbances protesting at injustice when there were no political crises. There are few examples of such disturbances. Cleander fell because the Urban Cohorts took the side of the populace when they marched on the palace where Commodus was at the time, but otherwise the combination of strong Emperor and Praetorian Guard kept the populace quiet. On the other hand the Emperor was usually sensitive enough to public opinion not to outrage it to the point of provoking violence, and Caracalla had to cover up his part in the attempted murder of his advisor Cilo on the Via Sacra by executing the soldiers he had sent to do the evil deed as if they had done it on their own initiative.[100]

During political crises the people were not deterred by the Praetorians and sometimes the Praetorians even assisted the plebeians: on the fall of Elagabalus the people and soldiers tore Aurelius Eubulus, who had been in charge of the 'Fiscus' (Treasury), to pieces.[101] Sometimes they did not: when the Senate and people revolted against Maximinus

Thrax, soldiers, the agents of his brutalities, were lynched.[102] The lack of a strong Emperor prompted the people to challenge the soldiers of the Guard on four separate occasions from the death of Commodus to the overthrow of Maximinus. First of all was the invasion of the Praetorian Camp to force the choice of Pertinax. Then after the murder of Pertinax and the auction of the Empire the Guard had to hold their shields up as they escorted Didius Julianus to protect themselves and him from any tiles hurled from the rooftops.

The other two events are so similar in character that one might doubt their separateness. According to Dio, during the Praetorian Prefecture of the jurist Ulpian the people and the Praetorians fought one another for three days, and the soldiers, finding that they were losing, set fire to buildings until the populace came to terms.[103] In 238 Herodian describes remarkably similar events. The guard, or soldiers loyal to Maximinus Thrax, barricaded themselves in the Praetorian Camp after a few of their number were killed for stumbling into the closed senate meeting which was held to choose senatorial candidates for the throne - since the failure of the revolt of the Gordians in Africa had left the Senate and People of Rome in revolt against Maximinus Thrax on their own. The camp was besieged by plebeians armed for the occasion, and the aqueduct supplying the camp was cut. The soldiers in desperation made a sally and on being set upon with bricks and tiles thrown from rooftops set fire to the buildings, devastating a larger area of the city than any other city covered.[104]

In conclusion the Praetorians did have a deterrent effect on disturbances. It is unlikely the Emperors of the early third century would have tolerated the contest between Damasus and Ursinus taking place in the city where they lived, and casual riots over wine and charioteers do not seem to have happened. On the other hand when riots did take place they tended to be more serious than in the fourth century, except of course

where necessity (for example famine) drove the people to protest in any period. Also the presence of an acknowledged Emperor behind the Guard gave it much of its deterrent force. The plebeians respected their Emperors and expected them to protect them from the Guard as well as set it on them. When the Praetorians acted on their own initiative the populace dared to oppose them. In the fourth century Emperor and Guard were no longer present, and it was the absence of both, rather than of the Praetorians alone, which permitted more disturbances. At the same time, the intensity of feeling in fourth century disturbances was less than in previous centuries, except of course where religion was involved.

CHAPTER 4

SHORT TERM SOLUTIONS TO RIOTING

1) Introduction

In this chapter I shall outline the types of riots, and other expressions of public feeling, and the immediate, short-term reactions and remedies used by the authorities; in other words, if it was a riot, the different methods the Prefect of the City would use depending on the cause of a riot to contain the disturbance, or if it was some other form of public expression, like a spontaneous outburst at the Circus, how the authorities regarded it. I will try also to show the development of the Prefect of the City's ability to cope with a riot, from the beginning of the century, when the Praetorian Guard, the Vigiles, the Urban Cohorts, and probably the Legio II Parthica were still at the disposal of the City, to the end of the fourth century, when all the Praefectus Urbi seems to have is a militarised civil service at his disposal. In contrast to the short term solutions are the long term solutions to rioting, those measures taken to ensure the people had no cause to riot, or at least that potential riots were spotted and contained before they could develop. Policing and surveillance were needed to prevent nascent riots getting started, but to remove the causes of riots the people had to be fed and entertained. Chapter 5 will concern these long term solutions; policing, the measures taken to ensure that the machinery of the distributions was run as efficiently and incorruptly as was possible at the time, and the efforts to ensure that Senatorial families met their obligations to hold Games and Gladiatorial combats.

2) Why the Prefect of the City or the Emperor (when resident in Rome) bore the brunt of the Plebeian Displeasure

When the Emperors resided in Rome they were the people to whom the populace turned when they had a grievance, such as lack of Corn, and took it out on, in as far as the Praetorian Guard and the Urban Cohorts

allowed them to. Thus Claudius was attacked in the Forum during a Corn crisis and barely escaped with his life.[1] However, the people could see the flaws of an Emperor who lived in Rome, and perhaps realised that the Emperor was not all-powerful with god-like powers (the idea, played up in the provinces by the Imperial Cult, was played down in Rome), and accepted his shortcomings. However, during the third century, Emperors were usually away from Rome on campaign, and the people would have come to blame their ills on the absence of the Emperor. They would start to look on the times when Emperors lived in the city as the good old days and this probably led to an exaggeration of the powers of Emperors and their abilities for getting things done in the minds of the Populus Romanus. By the fourth century this view of the Emperors contributed to the enthusiasm of the people for Imperial visits to Rome, and unless the Emperor showed himself over-sensitive, like Diocletian, or offended the people's religious sensibilities, or their ideas of Justice, as Constantine may have done (refusing to mount the Capitol to sacrifice, and executing Crispus), he was likely to be popular for the whole of his visit. This exaggerated view of the Emperor's abilities contributed considerably to Maxentius' initial popularity. It was too long since an autocrat had resided for a long time at Rome for the population to remember the disadvantages of an Emperor's presence, and they had this exaggerated belief that the Emperor was all-powerful. Thus Maxentius was a disappointment to them, but their continued faith in autocrats did not die, and they welcomed Constantine in 312 with as much enthusiasm as they had welcomed Maxentius six years before. After Maxentius no fourth century Emperor lived at Rome, and the people were free to go back to believing that the Emperor could do no wrong. The plebeian riots over the corn shortage caused by the revolt of Domitius Alexander in Africa show that they held the Emperor responsible for not doing anything about it. It also shows their faith in the supposed abilities of Maxentius to solve the crisis.

With the Emperor no longer resident in the City it was the Praefectus Urbi who became the recipient of the people's complaints, and their faith in the prefect's ability to set things to rights probably derived from their enthusiasm about the Emperor's abilities. The Prefect of the City of Rome was a viceroy on a par with the Praetorian Prefects in dignity, if not in sphere of influence. He was chosen directly by the Emperor, and served anything from three or four months to three or four years depending on the Emperor's wish; and because he was the Emperor's choice the people transferred their faith in the Emperor's abilities to the prefect, and they tended to blame him for things that went wrong, even if they were not his fault, as in the case of Tertullus, who was assailed by the people when winds were stopping corn ships entering Portus (A.M. XIX. 10). Another factor in the people's resort to the Prefect was the tendency for the Emperor to appoint a leading Senator as Prefect. The leading Senators should be able to persuade the Senate to dip into their resources in the event of a Corn Famine. The final factor in the people's choice of the 'Praefectus Urbi' to complain to was the fact that after 331[2] the 'Praefectus Urbi Romae' became the head of all services in the City from policing (which he had always been in charge of) to the Corn Supply (the Praefectus Annonae only now became his subordinate). Most of these services were looked after by his subordinates but he became ultimately responsible for everything.

3) Quelling Riots - when the Emperor lived in Rome

This section and the following two sections will deal with the problem of how the authorities dealt with public disturbance in the short term, that is, the quelling of riots by force, or the defusing of such riots as were difficult to deal with by force, either for diplomatic reasons (Section 5) or for lack of manpower (this section). The only fourth century Emperor to live at Rome was, as we have seen,

Maxentius, and he suffered from two recorded riots. In one a soldier was torn to pieces by a mob enraged by his blasphemy against providence, and as the riot ended as soon as the soldier was killed, and Maxentius held the Praetorian Guard off, to prevent them taking revenge on the people, it is really a matter for Section 5 (handling justified mobs).

The second riot was the one over the corn shortage caused by the revolt of Domitius Alexander in Africa, and this too involved soldiers quelling the people, except that on this occasion Maxentius did not hold back the Praetorians, but turned them on the people. This marks off the reign of Maxentius from the rest of the fourth century. By the time we next hear of riots in the century, that is in Ammianus, dealing with a riot by force consisted of a few arrests (A.M. XIV.6 & XV.7) - the first reference only mentions riots happening and not the treatment, but the second reference is to riots only two years after the first, so it is likely the treatment was similar), and not turning masses of troops on the plebs.

Throughout the century the military forces at the disposal of the authorities in Rome were diminished, except insofar as at some point in the fourth century the civil servants of the 'Officium Urbanum' became militarised, and some civil servants became a corps of police, called the 'Contubernales'. Even at the start of Maxentius' reign there was a diminution in the number of forces available to the authorities in Rome. According to Lactantius,[3] at approximately the same time as Galerius sent the census-takers to Rome, most of the Praetorian Guard was removed from the city. This may not be terribly significant as the revolt of Maxentius could have happened so soon after this that the rest of the Praetorians (that is those who had been removed from Rome, as opposed to those who had installed Maxentius) may still have been in Maxentius' territory. If they were not, the Emperor could have brought the Guard up to full strength from the troops who deserted Severus the Tetrarch. Maxentius in any case had enough

troops by the revolt of Alexander to send an expeditionary force to Africa under his Praetorian Prefect, Rufius Volusianus, and still hold his position in Italy, and enough troops in 312 to fight Constantine at the Milvian Bridge; so he would have had little trouble finding soldiers to police Rome and protect him, whether he enrolled them in the Praetorian Guard, or simply threw them in alongside.

The most significant diminution in the military forces available to the authorities came in 312, when Constantine disbanded the Praetorian Guard. He may also have removed the Legio II Parthica from nearby Alba Longa, if it had not already been removed before. There is an estate at Alba that the Liber Pontificalis mentions as having been given to the Church by Constantine for the upkeep of one of the new churches that Constantine was building at Alba.[4] This is not conclusive, but the legion was fighting the Persians by the middle of the century (A.M. XX. 6.1), and the occasion of the disbandment of the Praetorian Guard seems as good a time as any, especially as Constantine would want to prevent the possibility of anyone trying a usurpation at Rome, as Maxentius had.

The remaining forces near or in Rome after the disbandment of the Praetorian Guard and the removal of the legion from Alba, were the Urban Cohorts and the Vigiles. There were seven cohorts of Vigiles, probably about seven thousand men, who patrolled the city from sunset to sunrise, and three cohorts of Urban cohorts, probably about three thousand in number. The Praefectus Urbi commanded neither force directly, as the Urban Cohorts were commanded by the Tribunus Fori Suarii, the Vigiles by the Praefectus Vigilum. Neither force may have been of much use for controlling riots the way the Praetorians had, as riots were probably more likely to occur during the daytime, when the Vigiles were off duty and 'in cubiculo', and the only troops available would have been the Urban Cohorts. These were probably tied

down on surveillance and regular police duties all over the city (see next chapter), so that they would not be available in great numbers to help the Praefectus Urbi in the event of a major riot.

Attempts must have been made to rectify this situation, and in 321 the task of collecting levies on goods entering and leaving the city, formerly performed by the Urban Cohorts, was farmed out to contractors (Publicani), and apart from watching the gates for suspect persons, and making sure the 'publicani' did not extort from the merchants entering the city more than was due, the Urban Cohorts must have been freer than before.* Another remedy to the lack of availability of troops at the Prefect's immediate disposal must have been the militarisation of the civil servants, which had happened by the Prefecture of Leontius, in 354-5, as is shown by the Philoromus riot in Ammianus, where Leontius sends 'Apparitores' (civil servants) into the mob to arrest a few people (A.M. XV. 7). The civil servants were at the immediate disposal of the Praefectus Urbi, and once all civil servants could bear arms, the Urban Cohorts lost a lot of their usefulness, as civil servants could do anything they could, if not quite as well.

Some time between 357 and 384, and probably between 368 and 379, the Urban Cohorts were replaced by the 'contubernales', a force of civil servants with the same commander as the Urban Cohorts had had. (For the arguments about when exactly the change-over took place, see A. Chastagnol's Prefecture Urbaine à Rome sous le bas empire Part II, chapter 3.) It is probable that the new force took on the remnants of the Urban Cohorts, but the professionalism of the Contubernales was probably no more use in an emergency to the Prefect of the City, as they were not directly under his command. The only forces the Prefect could directly command were his own civil servants, and most of these were probably not renowned for their martial qualities, but were rather administrators. By Symmachus' time there

* Chastagnol P.U.R.B.E. Part II chapter 3.

was a bodyguard for the Praefectus Urbi, the Nomenclatores (see Chastagnol p.242-3), but after the disbandment of the Praetorian Guard in 312, the Praefectus Urbi probably never had enough troops of good quality to turn them on the Plebs in an emergency.

The Urban Cohorts, later the Contubernales, probably could have been turned on the people in a riot, but they were not under the orders of the Prefect, and would probably have been spread out through the city, so that they could not have been mobilised in a hurry in any case, and their abandoning of their tasks in other parts of the city would have perhaps led to more trouble. Thus the Praefectus Urbi could not practically do what Maxentius had done, turning troops loose on the plebs, after 312, whether Urban Cohorts or their successors were serving him, not to mention the diplomatic reasons for this (see section 5). As for the Vigiles, while they were twice as numerous as the Cohortes Urbanae, they had the duty of fire-fighting day and night, as well as of patrolling the streets at night, making the streets slightly safer for those who had to be out at night, by arresting burglars, drunks etc. This probably tied them down even more effectively than the duties of the Urban Cohorts/Contubernales. The latter could perhaps have left areas at which they were stationed, and perhaps passers-by would stop any trouble until they got back, though that could not be guaranteed, but for the Vigiles to abandon patrols in the deserted night streets to go and deal with a major riot would make their region(s) into 'no-go' areas. By the end of the century the Vigiles had been replaced by Collegiati (see Chastagnol for dates), and, Chastagnol argues, based on the situation at Constantinople, there were far fewer Collegiati (fire fighters provided by the Guilds) than there had been Vigiles, perhaps only 500, partly because Roman Hydraulics technology had made a significant advance, and far fewer people were needed to operate the fire-fighting equipment. The

Collegiati, organised by the Vicomagistri (there were 48 of these officials in each of the fourteen regions of the city) into patrols, probably also took on the police duties of the Vigiles, and would have been even less able to drop everything and tackle a major riot elsewhere in the city. Thus the removal of the Praetorian Guard, who were not tied down by regular duties in the city to the extent that the other forces in the city were, meant that extreme violence against rioters was not possible for most of the fourth century, and the Prefect of the City was always on tenterhooks thereafter, hoping no cause for rioting in his prefecture would arise.

There is no evidence for fourth century riots after the reign of Maxentius being crushed by official forces being turned on the unarmed plebs.

4) Quelling riots in the fourth century - Guilty mobs

What is meant here by a 'guilty mob' is a rioting mob that is not certain of the justice of its cause. Corn riots tended to be embarked on by justified mobs. The only case of a corn riot where the people could be faced out by a Praefectus Urbi was in 376 (see page 51), when the plebs demanded the expulsion of foreigners (peregrini). Otherwise rioters in Corn famines tended to be sufficiently sure of their cause for defiance on the part of the authorities to be unattempted. The best cases of 'guilty mobs' were those involved in the riots under the Prefect Leontius (A.M. XV.7). The first of these was over the arrest of a popular charioteer, Philoromus. The prefect merely sent some 'apparitores' into the crowd to make a few arrests, exiling those arrested, after torturing them, and the riot broke up without any protest at the prefect's actions in quelling the riots.

The second riot took place a few days later, and was over a wine shortage. The Prefect went into the middle of a mob that

many of his aides were afraid to follow him into, picked out a known troublemaker, called Petrus Valuomeres, while the mob was still hurling insults at him (Leontius), and gave orders for him to be flogged. Valuomeres pleaded with his fellow-rioters for help, but they all melted away, and Ammianus says that he was flogged where the riot had taken place as secretly as if he had been in a prison cell. He was then exiled to Picenum. Leontius may not have had the forces to throw at rioters that Maxentius had, but he could still use force in the sense of arresting ringleaders and making an example of them.

It is doubtful that Leontius could have faced a justified mob with such bold defiance of their numbers, but these were guilty mobs and Leontius' tactics could work. The effect of arresting the ringleaders of the riots was to give the other people in the riots both a warning and a let off: a warning, because anyone who continued to stay around the scene of the riot could expect, at best, to be branded as a troublemaker, at worst to receive the same treatment as those arrested; a let off, because the plebs that took part in the riots over charioteers or the price of wine were probably slightly ashamed of taking part, or at least worried about what their wives would say when they heard that they had been in such a riot, so that they were not prepared to become known troublemakers by persisting in the riot.

The arrest of the ringleaders also gave them back their respectability. It provided scapegoats on whom they could put all the blame for starting the riot and stirring them up. Having thus shifted all the blame onto others they became innocent bystanders and left the scene, so that they would not be associated with known troublemakers, such as Valuomeres. To show that these mobs under Leontius were 'guilty', and it was not just a matter of Leontius being incredibly brave, and hard hearted, the same prefecture also sees the arrest of Pope Liberius.[5]

In the arrest of Liberius, Leontius sneaks the pope out of Rome by night in order to avoid the notice of the people with whom Liberius was very popular. If there had been a riot on that occasion it would have involved a justifiably angry mob, so that we can see that even Leontius was not prepared to face a 'justified' mob, although he was brave enough in facing 'guilty' mobs.

5) Quelling riots in the fourth century - 'Justified' mobs

While quelling a 'justified' mob by force was usually unwise and impracticable, there was one situation where this could be done, although not in the same way as outlined in Section 4. This exception to the rule was in the case of mobs moved by religious conviction, as in the Damasus/Ursinus riots of the 360s. In these cases, unless the Praefectus Urbi was a Christian of a minority sect, (and this does not seem to have been the case in any of the Damasus/Ursinus riots, although a later prefect, Bassus, probably the prefect but one before Symmachus (Praefectus Urbi 384), refused to condemn a rigorist Luciferian bishop, at Damasus' request,[6]) the mob's fury would for once not be directed at him.

However, it was the Prefect's job to keep order in Rome, so that even riots not directed at him were still his business. As by the very nature of religious riots the people were divided into two factions he could not give in to the demands of both sides at the same time, the Prefect had to quell the riots by 'force', that is, by bringing the law to bear and exiling people.

To do this, however, he had to regain control of the city. The Damasus/Ursinus riots are the only serious religious riots in the fourth century after Maxentius' reign, that we have record of. (The Liberius/Felix affair seems to have consisted in the boycotting of Felix, calls in the Circus for the return of Liberius, and, after the

return of Liberius, the only example of positive action, the driving from the city of Felix.) Maxentius was able to quell the trouble in his reign by exiling the leaders of both factions (see above, chapter 3. II.2), pleasing neither side, but he had the forces to prevent more trouble. Viventius, the Praefectus Urbi of Rome when the Damasus/ Ursinus riots began, by contrast, had to stand by and watch the riots helplessly:

> "Damasus and Ursinus burning beyond human reason to seize the bishop's seat, were in conflict, their parties bitterly divided, to the point of deaths and injuries, which Viventius was unable to stop or soften. Driven by the great violence, he retired to the outskirts of the city."
>
> A.M. XXVII. 3.12 [7]

The means by which Viventius regained control was by supporting the stronger faction, that of Damasus (Collectio Avellana I.6). Damasus' faction was probably more useful than Ursinus' for another reason besides strength, and that was that to support Ursinus' rigorists was likely to set up a permanent split in the Roman church, with the rigorists excluding all who did not hold their views, and storing up trouble for the future. The Damasans on the other hand were for healing the wounds caused by the exile of Liberius and election of Felix, and while they killed a lot of Ursinians in the initial riots, the Damasans seem to have been happy enough after the leading Ursinians had been expelled from the city.

Evidently the choice of Damasus was the better one, as it enjoyed the favour of Valentinian I, an Emperor more interested in the tranquillity of the Eternal City than in religious matters, and Praetextatus continued to support Damasus when he in turn became Prefect after Viventius.[8] As the exiling of Ursinus and his leading followers brought an end to the rioting, as Ammianus testifies ('pulsoque Ursino, alta quies est parta' A.M. XXVII. 9.9), the lesser

followers of Ursinus must have been reconciled to Damasus (at the end of Damasus' reign, at the election of his successor, Siricius, the plebs acclaimed Ursinus as an 'improbus', which hardly shows support)[9] or else they were in such a minority that without the Ursinian priests to stir them up they did not have the nerve to cause trouble.

Choosing the side most likely to win was therefore the only way to cope with religious riots available to the Praefectus Urbi, and even that was not always reliable, as in the following century, at the riots between the supporters of Boniface and the supporters of Eulalius over the papal election of 418, the Prefect chose a different candidate from the Emperor, and was therefore humiliated. Choosing the stronger side was also not an option if the factions were of approximately equal strengths, but that fortunately did not happen in the fourth century.

Other 'justified' mobs could not be dealt with by exiling, and torture, and had to be treated more diplomatically. In some cases the Prefect had to take flight to save his life, as Lampadius did, when a mob enraged by his failure to pay for the building materials he had requisitioned from them set out to burn his house down (A.M. XXVII.3). It seems from what Ambrose said, when criticising Theodosius over his anger at the burning of a synagogue in the East, about the houses of Prefects burnt down[10] that such actions were not altogether rare. Symmachus' father, an ex-Prefect, also had a plebeian attack on his home (A.M. XXVII.3). In such cases the prefect had to lie low until the anger of the mob had cooled, and then presumably regain control, or ask to be relieved of his prefecture. As for protecting his house, the prefect probably had to rely on his neighbours, as happened in the case of Lampadius, when they pelted the mob with tiles from their roofs; though whether this was from love of Lampadius, who does not seem to have been particularly lovable,

if we can judge from Ammianus (XXVII.3), or merely fear that any fire would spread from his home to their own, it is impossible to say.

Usually, however, 'justified' mobs were not assailing the Praefectus Urbi as a person, but as Prefect, and they could be placated, or appealed to. An example of the latter comes in the prefecture of Tertullus (c. 360), in which bad weather prevented the grain ships from Africa from entering Portus, the port of Rome since the Emperor Claudius' time. A famine developed and the people gathered round the prefect demanding that he do something to relieve their plight, although he could do nothing about it. He was driven to show his children to the desperate mob, pointing out that they would also suffer from the famine and saying that they could tear him and his children to pieces if they thought it would do any good. Showing the children to the mob appealed to its members' better natures, and they relented from their attacks on Tertullus (A.M. XIX. 10).

It is noteworthy that he was sacrificing to Castor and Pollux, the protectors of ships at sea, when the weather cleared up and the ships entered Portus. Possibly the people were still pagan enough to appreciate the prefect sacrificing to improve the weather, or else Tertullus told the Christians to pray to their God, and said he would pray to his gods, or he was engaged in some regular sacrifice to the Dioscuri, and the whole affair is merely a coincidence.

The other means of coping with a 'justified' mob was to placate it, either by promising to do something about its grievances, or by giving it something in the meantime. The best example of a prefect giving the people something to keep them going in the meantime is in the 395/6 corn famine, where we have a letter of Symmachus (Symm. Ep. VI.26) which tells how the pork ration was distributed to keep the people fed until the emergency corn provided by Senators making contributions from their own estates could arrive. The provision

of corn by Senators was also one of the promises that the Prefect of 376 used to persuade the plebs to stop demanding the expulsion of Peregrini (foreigners) from Rome.[11]

It was of course possible for the prefect to appeal to the Emperor for help in a corn crisis, and prefects did this, but it took time to communicate with the Emperor, and then for him to mobilise the machinery for providing corn from provinces that did not normally supply Rome; it was more likely that the Emperor would take the initiative on matters like that, if he was going to do anything at all (see chapter 3. II. a.i for the details).

As it was difficult to get imperial involvement in preventing famine becoming serious in the short term it was easier for the Prefect of the City to promise the people to seek senatorial help. He would approach the Senate, either to arrange for contributions of corn to be made by the members as in 376 and 395/6, or he could arrange for the sending of a delegation to Africa to hurry along the corn supply, or find out why the corn supply was slow in coming and take necessary action, such as informing the Emperor, or the Prefect himself could write to the Emperor, as Symmachus did in 384, asking him to tell the imperial officials to get a move on. Epistle II.4 of Symmachus, dated to 383 by Seeck, mentions a Senatorial Embassy sent to Africa, either to investigate the corn shortage, or to buy some corn at senatorial expense, another possible means of placating the people in a corn crisis:

> "Antonius fecit indicium, legationis Africanae consilium torpuisse"

The reason that the prefects did not use force against justified mobs was simply that they did not have large forces at their disposal, and even had they had them they did not enjoy the Emperor Maxentius' advantage of being in office for life. The Prefects of the City of Rome served in office for at most three to four years, and after

that they returned to private life. If they offended the people by turning forces on them during a riot caused by desperation, as happened with famines, they would not be able to live in Rome if they valued their lives. But the people who tended to be appointed as Praefecti Urbi were leading Senators, whose social position and public influence depended on their living magnificently at Rome, and being active members of the Senate. In consequence they could not afford to alienate the Populus Romanus by unjustified and extreme action of the sort that Maxentius had used when he turned the Praetorians on the plebs during the Corn Riot of 308. Equally, the Senate did not shirk from providing corn or paying for its provision, because they did not want to seem uncaring to the people. If they did seem uncaring to the people during a corn famine they would not find life comfortable in the city and they lived in the city to keep up their social position, and also because the city gave them access to the law courts to bring cases (like many non-warrior aristocracies, they enjoyed their litigation).

6) The response of the authorities to 'Acclamationes' in Circus or Theatre

The Circus, Amphitheatre and theatres of Rome were very important as places where the people could voice their grievances or enthusiasm without violence. The Games and gladiatorial combats were important in that they allowed the people to let off steam where it would be least harmful. From this arose a reluctance on the part of the authorities to dampen that enthusiasm by stifling the people if they protested about a matter not connected with the entertainment, and the Circus thus became a useful measure for the ruling classes of what the mood of the ordinary people was, and what their grievances were before either mood or grievance got out of hand, and led to violence outside the Games.

Granted that there were plenty of riots in fourth century Rome, there would have been far more if the people had not had the

Games as an alternative means of voicing their grievances, besides rioting. The Games were thus an early warning system to those in charge of what was likely to cause trouble, and also what was likely to please the people (for example the return of Liberius was asked for in the Circus, according to the Collectio Avellana),[12] and even what would be tolerated by them. (The people may have asked for the recall of Symmachus in 398, but that was in 'theatralibus ludis',[13] and the theatres of Rome were tiny in comparison to the Colosseum and the Circus Maximus. 'Acclamationes' could be orchestrated in the theatre, but if plebeian feeling was against anyone in particular it is unlikely that such an acclamation for his recall could be engineered among the plebs even in the theatre, or if it was organised among the better off commoners that it would not be countered by an even more violent acclamation against him by the ordinary plebeians. If an acclamation was organised then, it was likely that the plebs would at least tolerate someone's return.)

The authorities tolerated freedom of speech to learn the feelings of the people, but what did they do in response? If the people were making unreasonable demands about something trivial, like which performers should be rewarded at the Games, the president of the Games might show his contempt, as Lampadius did when he summoned beggars from the Vatican and gave the rewards to them. If the people showed enthusiasm about someone, the Prefect of the City would inform the Emperor, as Symmachus does in Relatio 10, when he tells the Emperor of the popular shock on the death of Praetextatus, or as he does in Relatio 9, when he thanks Theodosius for providing Games:

"merito vos senatus ac populus ore celebrat"

(Rel. 9.4)

If the people wanted something, like a redressing of grievances, a Theodosian Code law of 365 orders the Prefect of the City to consult with

the Emperor before doing anything. The Prefect would probably have been doing this anyway earlier in the century, with this just being a formalisation of an established principle.[14] However, the Games were not the only place where the authorities heard the opinions of the people without violence. In 354 the Calendar of Philocalus lists 101 days (at least) of Ludi (Circus and Theatre Games) and Munera (Gladiators and wild beast shows),[15] but these days were not evenly spread throughout the year, and in March, June, and August there were hardly any days of Entertainments, if any at all. The Prefect therefore had to learn the people's feelings by other means. He did this by surveillance, and this must be the way that Symmachus was able to report to the Emperor that the Plebeians were talking of nothing else but the Games promised by the Emperor. As this surveillance was part of the long term solutions to riots, that is the measures to avoid riots happening in the first place, as opposed to the short term solutions listed above, which were used to quell, or damp down riots, once they had started, it will be described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

RIOTING IN THE FOURTH CENTURY - Long Term Solutions

I. Introduction

This chapter is intended to cover the measures taken by the Imperial administration to prevent riots taking place at Rome in the first place. These measures fell into two categories: those to reduce the opportunities for starting trouble (policing, surveillance and so on) and those to keep the people so happy that they would not need to riot (provision of 'bread and circuses'). Into the second category come also measures to prevent fire and other disasters that the people were likely to blame those in authority for. The way that produce for distribution to the plebs was brought to Rome has been described earlier, so that the part of the chapter concerning measures to keep the people happy will be more concerned with the laws of the Emperors to prevent those involved in the provisioning of the city trying, if even wanting to, opt out of their duties, than with the actual machinery of supply.

II. Measures to detect trouble, and prevent it, or stop it before it became serious.

For the authorities to prevent riots happening in Rome they had to keep the whole city under surveillance. This in effect meant using the entire Urban Cohorts for little more than that. As there were probably only 3,000 men in the Urban Cohorts (on the assumption of a maximum of one thousand men a cohort - more than would have been in a legionary cohort of the Early Empire) there can have been few men left for police duties, when more were needed, because of the difficulty of keeping the city under surveillance. This difficulty would not have afflicted the gridiron-planned cities founded by Rome, nor does it afflict modern cities with their wide streets.

The difficulty was that Rome was an unplanned city, with narrow streets, and its citizens had learned to build high, with 60 feet the maximum height allowed for buildings by law during the Early Empire[1]. That was, however, quite likely the standard height for tall buildings and many must have been illegally higher; whatever the height, these tall buildings would have cancelled out any surveillance advantage given by the hills of the city. Tallness of buildings in narrow streets would also have been a factor in the difficulty of seeing far down these streets. They would have cut down the light levels at ground level with their shadows, which might be a blessing in that it cut down the harsh Italian sunlight, but was a nuisance for a policeman looking down the streets, as he would only be able to see so far into the shadows, even if the street was straight.

Another factor which made surveillance difficult was the presence of balconies and lean-to extensions to buildings (which were illegal, but built all the same),[2] as these also would have blocked the view down the street, and, if there were shops in it, the view would be still further cut off, because the counters of shops were usually flush with the building they were in, and Roman shoppers queued in the street. The limited view that any soldier of the Urban Cohorts had must have meant that the members of the cohorts would have been stationed fairly close together, so as to be in sight of one another if they needed help.

Although some areas of the city, like the gardens in the outskirts, may not have needed so many of the Urban Cohorts to watch them, because of their relative openness, much of the city did consist of narrow streets lined with high rise Insulae, and there were places like the theatres and the Fora that would have been watched by more troops, as being likely places for trouble to begin. For instance

the Valuomeres riot under Leontius (Praefectus Urbi 355)[3] began at the Septizodium near the eastern end of the Circus Maximus.

All this must have stretched the Urban Cohorts so that they would not have been any help in crushing riots once they had started (see previous chapter (4, p.100), and it must be recalled that not all the Urban Cohorts would have been on duty at any one time. Even if the soldiers of the cohorts worked all the daylight hours, and that is unlikely during the long summer days, some of the soldiers would have been on leave, and others would have been sick, so that there could not have been 3,000 men on duty every day all year round. As well as general surveillance, there were other areas into which the Urban Cohorts stretched their manpower.

A special watch was kept on certain types of people, such as the Tabernarii (bar owners). An inscription, the edict of Tarracius Bassus, lists Tabernarii guilty of the ancient equivalent of ticket-touting, dealing in the Games money and bread dole 'tesserae'.[4] Another class that the Prefect of the City watched, probably through the Urban Cohorts, were the known troublemakers. Petrus Valuomeres, who was one of the main ringleaders, if not the Ringleader, of the wine riot in the Prefecture of Leontius,[5] was evidently well known to the authorities, such that they had a description of him (Leontius asks Valuomeres if he is Valuomeres, so he does not appear to know him from a previous encounter).

Another task of the Urban Cohorts, at least at the start of the century, may have been to collect tolls at the gates of the city. A. Chastagnol argues this on the basis that the garrison of Carthage did such duties in the fourth century, so that it is probable that the Urban Cohorts did man the 'Octroi' posts (the toll stations at the gates, so-called because they levied a toll of an eighth of the value of goods

passing through) of Rome. While doing this they would also have looked out for suspect persons entering and leaving the city.

Some time in the century the task of collecting tolls was farmed out to contractors, and Chastagnol believes that soldiers of the Urban Cohorts watched the contractors to make sure they did not exact more than was due. In any case the Urban Cohorts would have watched those entering and leaving the City.[6] Sometimes exiles tried to slip back into the City, as is shown by the worry of the authorities about the Ursinian priests trying to return to Rome when Valentinian I allowed them to go anywhere in the Empire except Italy.[7] The soldiers would probably also be watching out for known criminals or brigands. Two centuries before, Juvenal complained:

> "Meanwhile the cutthroat with his sword goes about his sudden business: as often as the Pomptine Marshes and the Gallinarian Forest are surrounded by an armed guard, so all of that kind come running from there to here as if to their warren."
>
> (III. 305-308)[8]

That was over a century before the building of the Aurelian Wall, and if the authorities had managed to reduce the number of criminals entering Rome from the outside, and limited urban crime to urban criminals, it would have been because of the soldiers watching the gates of the new wall (which enclosed the entire city. There were no buildings further than six hundred yards beyond the wall).[9]

The cohorts would also have been present at the Games to keep order. They could not have made a great impact there, because even all three thousand would not have had much chance of making themselves noticed among the 250,000 audience of the Circus Maximus, but they may have protected the president of the Games and/or the Prefect of the City, and they may also have enforced the seating of the various classes in their respective areas of Circuses and theatres.

Ammianus Marcellinus in his first satirical passage on the people of Rome talks of people who "sub velabris umbraculorum theatralium latent" (hang out under the cover of shades at the theatres) (XIV. 6.25) and it is likely that the cohorts would have had men watching them (though if Ammianus refers to people sleeping in the theatres, it would seem to be more a duty of the Vigiles rather than the Urban Cohorts), and they probably also held back expectant crowds outside the theatres, the Colosseum, or the Circus Maximus, to make way for the people's favourite actors and mimes, for the gladiators and exotic beasts, and for the charioteers, chariots and horses, respectively, on their way into the places of entertainment.

The seven cohorts of Vigiles, who doubled as night-time police force and fire brigade, were more numerous than the Urban Cohorts, but this numerical advantage was probably cancelled out by the Vigiles' fire duties. In the late fourth century the fire service at Constantinople was little over 500 in number,[10] and as that city was modelled closely on Rome, the Collegiati, who replaced the Vigiles in Rome, were probably no more numerous than their eastern counterparts.

From this one might conclude that few more than that number of Vigiles would be needed to fight fires, and that most of the Vigiles would act as night-time police. However, the building of the watermills on the Janiculum in the later part of the century suggests that Roman water technology had taken a step forward. Consequently the Vigiles would have needed more than 500 men to put out fires in the years previous to the innovation, whereas the Collegiati who replaced them used better pumping equipment, and needed fewer men (if there had been pumps before then; if there were not, then the Vigiles would have needed far more fire fighters than their successors). If this was so, the Vigiles would have had very few resources for night time policing.

They were a 24 hour fire service; so they could not deploy their forces completely at night, or there would have been no men capable of fire fighting in the day time. Even at night it would have been better to keep reserve forces at the headquarters of the cohorts (one to every two regions of the city), so that if a patrol of Vigiles came across a fire that it could not tackle alone, help could be sent. With no street lighting the Vigiles would have patrolled the city rather than stand at fixed positions (which the Urban Cohorts probably did).

In any case, because they were looking out for fires and criminals rather than trying to spot incipient riots, they had to patrol the streets. The resources of the Vigiles would have been further reduced by the need to send a detachment down the Tiber to Ostia/Portus, presumably to protect the granaries there from fire. All in all, the various duties of the Vigiles probably reduced their effective numbers for preventing riots or controlling them when they were still small to roughly those of the Urban Cohorts in the day time, with the additional handicap that, because it was dark they could only cover the City by patrolling it, and that would mean that Vigiles would pass any spot in the city only at intervals, whereas the Urban Cohorts could keep potential trouble spots under continuous observation.

The Vigiles therefore were not particularly useful in detecting and preventing trouble, and probably even less able to be summoned from their regions than even the Urban Cohorts, as the regions could not be left without some fire protection. That said, the Vigiles did serve a useful purpose (apart from the fact that preventing fires spreading gave the plebeians less motive for riots) in that their presence gave slightly more safety to the inhabitants of Rome during the night, since criminals had to avoid running into their patrols, and because they arrested criminals they came across on their patrols. They brought

these before the Praefectus Vigilum, who had his headquarters at the headquarters of the 1st Cohort of the Vigiles, which was in the Campus Martius area of the city (the barracks of the Urban Cohorts, the Castra Urbana, was also in the Campus Martius).

How effective the Vigiles were in preventing night time crime and arresting criminals and troublemakers, one cannot say. In the second century, when there were no fewer Vigiles, Juvenal, who is admittedly a satirist, paints a picture of a poor man being picked on by a drunken bully, which seems all too credible. If the streets were crawling with Vigiles even Juvenal would have had to rescue his poor man by the timely appearance of a patrol of Vigiles, but he does not, and the freedmen Vigiles of the first and second centuries A.D. ought to have provided a butt for Juvenal's satire.[11]

The Urban Cohorts and the Vigiles did not survive the fourth century and it is necessary to look at their successors, the Contubernales and the Collegiati, respectively, to see how they contained trouble and how far they differed from their predecessors.

Being a civil servant in Rome had become a form of 'militia' (military service), as it had elsewhere in the Empire, by the middle of the century. Evidence of this is the fact that the 'Apparitores' (civil servants) around Leontius during the riots in his Prefecture had powers of arrest.[12] Later in the century the Urban Cohorts were replaced or reformed into the Contubernales , a body of civil servants specialising in police work. They took over the Castra Urbana and the commander of the Urban Cohorts, the Tribunus Fori Suarii, with it.[13] They would have taken over the surveillance duties of the Cohorts, and their other duties, but whether they took on other tasks it is difficult to say. Since they took over the Castra Urbana, we can perhaps presume their numbers were probably similar to those of the Cohorts, although this is by no means certain, because being civil servants the

individual members of the Contubernales may well have had their own residences in the city, using the Castra Urbana as a base when on duty; in this case the size of the Castra would be no indication of the numbers of the Contubernales.

If they were no more numerous than the Cohortes Urbanae, the Contubernales were probably doing no more duties than their predecessors; but if they were more numerous than the Cohorts, they may have been the civil servants who were sent to carry out important arrests.

The only suggestion that this was not the case is the fact that, like the Cohortes Urbanae, they were not under the direct command of the Praefectus Urbi, and therefore of his subordinates in the Officium Urbanum, who might have found it easier to make the arrests themselves by virtue of their 'militia' than work through the Tribune. The terminology used about civil servants making arrests in the later part of the fourth century is not precise enough to distinguish which group of civil servants under the Praefectus Urbi were making the arrest. In Relatio 23 of Symmachus there are two accounts of prisoners being seized from civil servants of the Officium Urbanum, but neither seem to suggest the civil servants being Contubernales (A. Chastognol believes that the Contubernales had replaced the Urban Cohorts by 384).[14]

In the first case an advocate of the Prefect of the City's court, who seems to have been trying to build up a Clientela among the corporations concerned with the city's food supply, Celsus, seized a pistor (baker) 'manibus Officialium' (from the hands of officials - Symm. Rel. 23.3). The second case is the seizure of Felix from the civil servants escorting him by followers of Fulgentius, a high imperial official, who did not want Felix to give evidence embarrassing to him. Felix was being escorted behind the Prefect of the City's carriage, which suggests the civil servants were the Praecones or Nomenclatores,

the Prefect's personal bodyguard, who, as their name suggests, were also involved in summoning people in the Prefect's Court.

The Collectio Avellana in its passage on the riots involved in the 365 A.D. elections of Damasus and Ursinus as rival popes mentions the leading Ursinians being arrested, but rescued by the 'plebs fidelis':

> "Also he strove to drive seven priests arrested by the 'Officium', but the faithful plebs came and freed the same priests and led them to the Liberian Basilica without delay".
>
> (C.A. I. 6-7)[15]

365 A.D. is probably before the Contubernales came into existence,[16] but again the language is imprecise. If the Cohorts still exist, they are not the detainers of the priests. Those are clearly civil servants, but if the Contubernales exist, there is no indication that it is them rather than the ordinary members of the Officium Urbanum.

Probably then the Contubernales did little more than the Cohortes Urbanae, that is: surveillance, and containing local trouble in the areas in which they were stationed. They and the Urban Cohorts would undoubtedly contribute to the tranquillity of Rome in the fourth century through their presence deterring trouble in their vicinity, throughspotting potential riots, and through stopping trouble that could grow into a riot, if it had not already grown too large to handle. But neither could be used to put down large riots (as was seen in the previous chapter) by force, because they would have been too few in number to act both as riot police and carry out their surveillance and general police duties at the same time.

As to the night, the Cohortes Vigilum were replaced by the Collegiati. As their name implies, the Collegiati were recruited from the guilds/corporations of the city. How many Collegiati there were at Rome cannot be ascertained, but the Regionaries of Constantinople say that that city had 560 Collegiati, and A. Chastagnol makes the reasonable assumption that the same was the case at Rome.[17] While I

agree with Chastagnol that there was a considerable drop in numbers from Vigiles to Collegiati, I would be more cautious about taking Constantinople as an analogy to Rome, although both cities had equal status in theory.

There are two principal reasons why Constantinople might have had fewer Collegiati than Rome. The first is one of need. The only forces at the disposal of the Praefectus Urbi Romae were the Cohortes Urbanae (later the Contubernales) and the Vigiles (later the Collegiati), whereas the authorities in Constantinople, where the Eastern Emperor usually resided, when he was not on campaign, could ask for the support of the Scholae of the Imperial Guard, who were at their disposal in the same way the Praetorians would have been at the disposal of the authorities in Rome in earlier centuries, in an emergency. However, that was not all (and in this Constantinople must have been better provided for than Rome had been with the Legio II Parthica nearby at Alba during the third century): Constantinople was the headquarters of the Comitatenses Palatini of the East, that is the part of the Eastern Army that always fought where the Emperor fought. With all these troops quartered in and around Constantinople, the city probably could manage with only 560 fire fighters day and night. If matters got beyond them the army could be brought in to restore the situation, whether quelling riots, or providing extra hands to man the fire-fighting equipment. A further reason that Constantinople would not have needed as many Collegiati as Rome was her small size in the fourth century, when compared to Rome.

The other principal reason why Rome might have had more Collegiati than her sister city could be a political reason. Constantinople was not far from Nicomedia, where Trajan in the early second century A.D. had refused permission for the formation of a Fire Brigade, on the grounds that it would become a vehicle for the factional fighting

that was gripping that city at the time.[18] Constantinople had been the Greek city of Byzantium until the 330s and as later events proved was no less prone to factional fighting. Constantinople's factions were grouped round the Circus Factions, the Greens and the Blues, and, while support for the Circus factions was intense at Rome and in other cities of the Empire, at Constantinople the faction rivalry became political and violent.[19] In the light of this then there might have been political reasons for having so few Collegiati at Constantinople.

Although there are drawbacks in making an analogy to Constantinople in this case, there are practical reasons to suppose that there were far fewer Collegiati than there had been Vigiles at Rome. One of these is that the Collegiati were recruited from the Guilds, and if the Collegiati did nothing but fire-fighting, to replace the Vigiles with similar numbers of Collegiati would make a significant hole in the capacity of the corporations/guilds to carry out their normal duties. If the fire-fighting Collegiati also carried on with their old jobs, then fire-fighting would be seen as an additional burden and there would have been a reluctance to serve in the Collegiati, and the Guilds would probably have appealed to the Emperor to lighten their burden had they had to divert the services of 7,000 of their members whenever fires broke out in the city, not to mention the fact that the Collegiati taking over the night time police duties of the Vigiles[20] would mean that half this number would have been too tired to carry out their day time jobs. It is therefore improbable that there were anything like 7,000 Collegiati.

A further argument against such a high figure is the probability that the Collegiati were recruited from only a small number of Corporations/Guilds which were skilled in activities similar to fire-fighting, such as the 'Fabri Tignarii', the 'Centonarii' (the wagonners, who could transport the fire-fighting equipment to the scene

of the fire), and the 'Dendrophoroi'. J. P. Waltzing suggests these guilds, and also that they continued with their normal trades during the day.[21]

If the Collegiati continued their old jobs alongside their fire-fighting, then it is probable that not all Guilds could have been recruited from. Some would not be available, such as the 'Naviculariì', who carried out most of their activities outside the city, or the 'Pistores' (the bakers), who would be working at night, and who would be more likely to cause fires than put them out. Others might not be suitably skilled in, or of the right physical build for, fire-fighting and keeping order in the city at night, such as, perhaps, those involved in providing luxury services, like the gilders or the dyers in purple. Even if the Collegiati were entirely dedicated to fire-fighting, there might be a preference for people from the 'Fabri Tignarii', 'Centonarii', and the 'Dendrophoroi', when new members had to be recruited.

In the light of this concentration on only a few corporations/ guilds, it would be impossible to recruit anything like 7,000 Collegiati. Also new hydraulic technology meant that pumps could be used to project water at fires and far fewer people were needed to fight a fire. However, these fewer people would probably have to be skilled in handling the equipment, and it was probably for that reason that the Collegiati were recruited, especially if they were recruited from Guilds that had the most affinity for fire-fighting.

For instance the 'Fabri Tignarii' may have been involved in the making of the fire-fighting equipment, so that they could carry out running repairs while on the job. If only two or three guilds were being recruited from, whether to spend all their time fire-fighting, or only part of their time, then there are unlikely to have been over a thousand Collegiati, even if there were more than in Constantinople.

Before touching on the problems of policing the city with so few Collegiati, it would be as well to mention some evidence on both sides of the problem of whether the Collegiati were full-time fire-fighters or only part-time firemen. The main argument against full-time fire-fighters is that even a thousand members removed from the Corporations/Guilds in general would be quite a loss to the resources of the Guilds, but it would be an intolerable burden on just a few Guilds. Some Guilds were short of members through illegal exemptions (for example the 'Mancipes Salinarum' in Symmachus' Relatio 44), so that to lose members by legal means would be the last straw for them. I am inclined to believe that the Collegiati did continue their old jobs alongside their fire-fighting, as the only evidence which might be adduced for full-time fire-fighting is rather ambiguous:

> "Nor does one think that Your Eternity, the man nearest to divinity, has rashly forsaken the course once begun; he knew burdens of so great a city are sustained by the work of these corporations. There are the sheep drivers, those who drive the cattle to feed the people, those who have the duty of providing pork supplies, some who carry wood to be burned at the Baths, and the people who turn their skilled hands to majestic building works; fortuitous fires are fought by others."
>
> (Symm. Rel. 14.3)[22]

While the passage does not exclude the possibility that the 'alios' may be carrying on their usual jobs as well as fighting 'fortuita incendia', the general sense of the passage, listing the various Guilds, seems to imply special fire-fighting guilds.

As far as the main subject of this study, public order, is concerned, the drop in numbers entailed by the Collegiati replacing the Vigiles must have been fairly dramatic. They could not have been used to quell riots by any stretch of the imagination, far less than the Vigiles could have, and as was seen earlier the Vigiles could barely do so themselves. They can have provided only a minimal coverage of the city, going about in small patrols to watch out for

fires (to summon their colleagues to) and criminals, as the Vigiles had, but either they travelled in smaller groups than their predecessors or they would have had much larger areas to patrol. The Collegiati were not organised on military lines, as the Vigiles were. Their patrols would have been organised by the 'Vicomagistri',[23] who organised patrols in their districts ('vici').

The Vicomagistri and the Curatores Regionum had been in existence since the reign of Hadrian, but their posts had not been very significant until the end of the century, probably the 380s,[24] when they were reorganised. They became the most important local officials within the city. The Curatores, now numbering one per region, and being recruited from the Senate, became virtually vice-prefects of the city in their regions. The Vicomagistri, their subordinates, performed their own duties at night.

The Curatores and Vicomagistri were the senior ranks in the Prefect's forces for maintaining tranquillity in the Eternal City. The Curatores were originally freedmen, but by the reign of Septimius Severus they were recruited from the Equites. From the reign of Constantine there were two per region. They were responsible for religious surveillance of their regions, and they informed the Prefect of the City of what happened in their regions, and made known to their regions the Prefect's orders, through the Denuntiator (herald) attached to each region.[25]

They were assisted by the Vicomagistri-four per vicus under Hadrian, forty eight per region in the time of the Regionaries (350s) - but these Vicomagistri became much more important during the late fourth century. The importance of the Curatores in the late fourth century is shown by the anachronistic Augustan History life of Alexander Severus which shows that the Prefect of the City consulted with the Curatores before making any decision relative to the city.[26]

The Vicomagistri, who reported to the Prefect of the Vigiles as well as assisting the Curatores, must have become more important, since they would have been solely responsible for the organisation of the patrols of the Collegiati, no longer having the support of the officers of the Vigiles, which they would have had before the Vigiles were replaced.

The Curatores, A. Chastagnol suggests, from a hint in the Historia Augusta's Life of Marcus Aurelius, may also have been responsible for watching the 'Publicani' at the 'octroi' posts to make sure they did not extort too much, a former task of the Urban Cohorts. The change in status of the Curatores must have occurred by the late fourth century when the Historia Augusta is believed to have been published, and Chastagnol suggests from Symmachus' silence that the reform had not occurred by 384, though he admits it is dangerous to rely on an 'argumentum ex silentio.'[27]

The reform of the position of the Curatores and the Vicomagistri would have had positive and negative effects on the administration of the city. The need to consult with the Curatores was another check on the power of the Praefectus Urbi, but, if the Curatores were doing their jobs, they should be in contact with the mood in their part of the city, and they should be cooperative with him, as they were Senators themselves and would want to prevent public disturbance as much as their superior. As for the Vicomagistri, the increased importance of their position after the replacement of the Vigiles by the Collegiati must have made for increased amateurism in the management of the night security forces of Rome, a thing against the trend of the fourth century. However, with the replacement of the Cohortes Vigilum, with their military organisation, and the need for some form of command to be organised to run the Vigiles' successors, the Vicomagistri, who had some part in organising patrols of the Vigiles in their parts of the city, were as suitable candidates as any.

By the end of the fourth century the authorities were probably no worse off in their ability, or rather, inability, to quell riots, but the replacement of the Vigiles with the Collegiati would have made surveillance more difficult at night; though, because major riots tended to be directed at the Prefect of the City, who worked in the day time, there would not be as much trouble at night in any case.

The Curatores Regionum must have at least made the Praefectus Urbi as sensitive to what was going on in Rome as they had before, during the day. The main loss to the City from all the reforms of the late fourth century must have been the poorer patrolling of the streets at night, which would probably mean the apprehension of fewer criminals. The streets would be more dangerous to the individual at night, though even the Vigiles may not have provided the most effective of coverage of the city, as I suggested in connection with the Juvenal passage (see page 116). I make the assumption that the Collegiati, with improved equipment, could cope with as many fires as the Vigiles.

As the Plebs is not recorded to have rioted about lack of lawmen protecting it on the streets, it is probably safe to assume that the forces available to the authorities at the end of the fourth century were as effective at preventing riots as those available in 312, when the Praetorians were disbanded, leaving the authorities with no more than the Urban Cohorts and the Vigiles, who were too much tied to surveillance to quell large riots by force. The only evidence that this might not have been the case is the large number of riots we have record of in the late fourth century compared to the early part of the century, but this may just be due to lack of literary evidence - no Symmachus to mention them in letters then - or perhaps there were more things to displease the people: in chapter 3 I suggested that there were more famines in the latter part of the fourth century, and that it was not just a matter of lack of literary or documentary evidence in the early part of the century.[28]

III. Measures to keep the people sufficiently happy not to riot

1) Panem (and other food)

In this section I intend to cover the various measures that the authorities, both those at Rome and the imperial authorities elsewhere in the Empire, took to ensure the city received the corn for the bread dole.

The people who produced the corn were the provincials of Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia, and, as provincials in other parts of the Empire also paid their taxes in corn or other crops, because of the financial crisis of the late third century and early fourth (though to support the army rather than the citizens of Rome), they were presumably subject to the same laws with regard to tax exactions as people in other provinces. The corn tribute to the city of Rome would not have been exacted with any more vigour than the tribute to support the Army, but equally the Roman corn was probably levied with no less energy than that for the army. This is shown to be likely by the attention paid to Rome's corn supply further along the line, for example in the measures taken in 384, when Africa seemed unlikely to be able to contribute much to Rome's corn supply, and emergency supplies were sought from Egypt.[29]

Sicily, Sardinia, and Africa had been providing corn for Rome for centuries, as had Egypt, until its resources were diverted to Constantinople in the middle of the century. None of the three corn growing areas that supplied Rome had much commitment to supplying the Army, Sicily and Sardinia being islands and nowhere near any frontiers, and Africa only needing a few troops to keep out desert marauders. If it had not been for the authorities' concern for the supply of Rome these provinces might have been comparatively blessed. In fact they must have had their corn exacted with the same thoroughness as the provinces which supplied the Army, especially as the removal of Egypt from the equation meant that there was probably very little leeway

between the three areas being able to supply Rome and not being able to.

After all, Josephus, writing in the First Century, said that Egypt alone was able to supply Rome for four months a year,[30] and now the other corn-providing provinces had to make eight months' supply stretch to twelve. Though some allowance can be made the other way for a decrease in the population, the number of people actually receiving the corn dole was probably more than in the first century.[31] Of course, if a famine occurred in Africa, the exaction of corn was not absolutely automatic. As argued in chapter 3, it seems likely that in 383/4 the imperial authorities realised that Africa, which had experienced an appalling crop failure in 383, would need relief from its corn tribute, so that the crop of 384 could mainly be used for seed corn to get the 385 crop back to normal levels.

Another indication of the importance that the imperial authorities attached to the provisioning of Rome, and consequently the exaction of the African, Sicilian, and Sardinian corn, was the creation of the post of Praefectus Annonae Africae, by 314 A.D., who in collaboration with the Vicarius Africae saw to the collection of the corn from the African provinces and to the despatch of the corn to Rome from Carthage. It is at this stage that the laws of the 'Codex Theodosianus' become useful in illustrating the concern of the imperial authorities that famines should not happen at Rome.

Rome's corn tribute passed through the hands of several guilds between being despatched from Africa, or the other corn supplying provinces, and its distribution to the people of Rome in the form of bread, but the two guilds that most worried the authorities, as is shown by the numerous rescripts on other guilds in the chain,[32] were the shippers (Naviculariі) and the bakers (Pistores).

As we are concerned with the African part of the supply-line of corn for the 'Urbs Aeterna', the bakers do not yet greatly concern us;

suffice to say that membership of either guild was not entirely popular, and strenuous efforts were made by the authorities to prevent members evading their responsibilities, and that both guilds were legally hereditary. What then were the carrots and sticks with which the Emperor tried to keep up the membership of the guild of the Navicularii to a level where it could carry Rome's corn and oil supplies across the western Mediterranean sea?

The Navicularii did not receive any payment for carrying the corn supply of the city, and the penalties if they did not carry their cargo to Ostia/Portus by the shortest possible route, in the shortest possible time, or lost some of their cargo through their own fault (overloading their ships so that they sunk, or selling some of the corn en route, just as today some oil tankers sell oil to South Africa which should have gone to Europe) were harsh. The Navicularius might have to pay for the lost corn in full. However, there were numerous checks along the route to prevent deliberate loss, and in the event of shipwreck the Navicularius would not be condemned if the enquiry into the wreck found that the wreck was not his responsibility but merely an act of God/the gods.[33]

These checks were not designed merely to trap unscrupulous Navicularii, but to ensure that Navicularii were not unduly penalised if corn was lost. The authorities had to be fair, to prevent the sticks driving Navicularii out of business, and the guild, instead of into remaining in the guild. The carrots included exemption from public 'munera', the bane of the town councillor class, from which many of the shippers would probably have come, and tax exemption.[34] Also the Navicularii were given equestrian status, which included exemption from torture (and punishment of anyone torturing them).[35] In 369 there was a law about what courts could be used in cases involving Navicularii, which probably favoured the Navicularius himself,[36] and in 395 a rescript

to the provincials of Africa says that Naviculariі are not to be burdened with imposts, when transacting business of their own.[37]

The burden of carrying grain to Rome free of charge did not affect the individual Naviculariі every year. Once they arrived at Ostia/Portus and it had been verified that no corn was unaccountably missing and that the shipper was not responsible for what loss there might have been, he received a certificate, which he had to present to the Praefectus Annonae Africae within two years. During the two years the Navicularius could carry out his own business and benefit from the privileges of being a Navicularius.[38]

While the privileges of being a member of the guild were desirable, the penalties for failure to carry the grain to Rome intact were a serious burden to counterbalance these privileges. The imperial authorities had enough problems with people defecting from other bodies, like the Curiales (town councillors), without the worry of Naviculariі opting out in large numbers.

The loss of Naviculariі threatened the tranquillity of Rome, and, as has been seen, the authorities were very concerned to maintain that tranquillity, so that they had to make the privileges of the Naviculariі enticing enough to maintain numbers, even if they had to back up those carrots with the stick of compulsory membership of the guild for anyone acquiring land belonging to the guild, and deter persons from entering the guild to engage in fraud at the expense of Rome's corn supply. Nor would they permit excuses; a law of 399 instructs Naviculariі to build ships according to the requisite and constituted size, so that they may receive due and legal cargoes (of corn);[39] and a law of 397 says that the Praetorian Prefect will see to the restoration of fleets collapsed through neglect or age.[40]

There was one other area at the provincial end of the business of the corn supply for the city of Rome in which the authorities

involved themselves, and that was making sure that the corn got at least as far as the Naviculariii, without being diverted. A law of 397 invalidates any grants of remission of grain or oil tribute to Rome given by imperial favour, and forbids anyone to divert corn bound for Rome, even if it is delayed at the coast of Africa. The lack of similar legislation in the Theodosian Code for earlier years of the fourth century may suggest that the final cutting off of the Egyptian corn supply to Rome in the 380s made it even more imperative that none of Africa's supply was lost, and the situation in the 390s after the death of Theodosius was even worse, because the Courts of the Eastern and Western Emperors were not even on speaking terms, let alone ready to help each other in a corn crisis affecting Rome or Constantinople.

397 was the year that Gildo, who controlled Africa, cut off the African corn supply to Rome as part of his break from the western court dominated by Stilicho, so that the issuing of this law is doubly significant as a prelude to this act in the autumn of that year.[41] The importance of all Africa's tribute reaching the 'Urbs Aeterna' after Egypt ceased its contribution is perhaps shown by an incident in the 370s when a proconsul of Africa relieved a famine in Carthage by opening the granaries storing the tribute. Although he was later prosecuted, it was not for opening the granaries, but for embezzling the profits he made buying replacement corn with the money paid for the grain he made available in the famine, after the famine was over.[42]

When the Naviculariii arrived at Ostia/Portus their cargo was checked and some of it would have been put on riverboats to be taken straight to Rome, the rest being stored at the granaries of Ostia and Portus. Here again the intervention of the State is seen, because the State preferred obligation rather than Nationalisation. Rather than own the granaries and storehouses needed to keep Rome's corn and oil tribute at Ostia/Portus itself, and so incur the expense of running them,

the State obligated the owners of private granaries and warehouses to dedicate themselves to storing Rome's tribute when it arrived at the mouth of the Tiber, presumably at the State's expense, or in exchange for certain privileges.

The former is most likely, as some owners thought it more profitable to hire their warehouse space to the private sector. A law of 364 instructs the Praefectus Urbi to compel the people who have 'privatised' their storehouses to restore them to the service of the Annona.[43] The law mentions the same thing happening at Rome as at Ostia/Portus, and only the very largest of granaries in Rome were under imperial ownership, the central one being the 'Horrea Galbana.' In addition to these large granaries were many small ones scattered throughout the city, 290 in the 350s, according to the Regionaries.

Between Ostia/Portus and Rome the imperial authorities appear to have had few problems in ensuring the corn reached the city granaries, because the Saccarii (who as their name suggests carried the bags of grain) had been given monopoly at Ostia/Portus in exchange for their service to the corn supply from 364. They had to be employed by private traders delivering goods to Ostia/Portus for their own business. If the traders used their own labour they had to pay 20 per cent in tax.[44] As this is the only law on the Saccarii in the fourth century it would seem reasonable to suppose that this monopoly made the business of the Saccarii profitable enough that they did not find service to the Annona burdensome.

The Tiberine boatmen who took the corn up to the Port of Rome on the west side of the Aventine had a similar monopoly on carrying goods on the Tiber, and there was only one law concerning them in the fourth century - that to do with their monopoly. The imperial authorities did not have to intervene to keep them in service to the Annona, and the main problem for the authorities with the guilds of the Mensores (who checked the Naviculariі had carried all the corn given to them in Africa

without loss), the Saccarii, and the Tiberine boatmen may have been that of preventing fraud and corruption, rather than that of keeping them at Rome's disposal.[45]

When the grain got to Rome the authorities had to see to it that the corn was stored properly, that none of it was diverted from where it should have gone to the profit of those in charge of it, and that it got turned into bread to be distributed. Whether all the granaries in Rome were used is doubtful, as far as the corn tribute is concerned. It really depends whether the bread was distributed to every plebeian, or whether only to heads of families (including widows who could inherit dole tickets - 'tesserae') and perhaps some children (Trajan had made children eligible for the distribution of corn as part of the 'alimenta' scheme, an early form of child benefit, designed to increase the Italian birthrate).[46]

If it was only to heads of families and a few others, then most of the private granaries in Rome would have been used for the free market corn, and the corn tribute would have gone to the large state granaries. G. Rickman points out that the corn dole of the Late Republic, which alone would have been enough for the average adult male's intake of calories, was not the whole answer, because by itself it would have been an unbalanced diet. Also, at that time, the recipient had to get his corn turned into bread, a problem which did not afflict his late imperial counterpart.

The Republican recipient would have had to get money to buy the services of a baker to mill his corn and bake his bread,[47] and both he and his Late Imperial counterpart would have to balance their diets. If they did this they would not need all their ration for themselves and would have distributed it within their families, which would mean that not all members of their families would individually be in receipt of corn or bread dole. While the corn/bread ration was not ungenerous

to individuals, it was not enough for a family and there would be demand for bread on the free market in the Late Empire; in which case many of the granaries scattered through the city would be used for this free market corn used in the making of free market bread.

The fact that the Late Republic/Early Empire corn dole would have been too much for a balanced diet for a single individual, suggesting that it was given mainly to heads of families and a few others, leads me to reject the idea that all citizens received the bread dole in the Late Empire. Chastagnol puts this forward based on the work of D. Van Berchem, who deals with the Early Empire distribution of corn. Rickman is not at all happy with Van Berchem's theory that all Roman citizens at Rome who could prove their 'origo' as Rome were eligible for the corn dole. Richman's point, that the corn dole was around the complete calory intake of an adult male, but that other food was needed to balance the diet, meaning a recipient was unlikely to consume his ration by himself, leads me to agree with him that Van Berchem's argument is shaky, although Rickman also brings up other arguments against Van Berchem.

As Chastagnol's argument relies on Van Berchem, I think it unlikely that Roman citizens automatically received the bread dole in the Late Empire. This is incidentally important to the size of Rome's population, of which more elsewhere.[48]

The State's involvement with private granaries was dealt with in connection with their dealings with private granaries at Ostia (see above p.133) but the largest granary in Rome, the 'Horrea Galbana', had come into imperial ownership during the Early Empire, and there are laws concerning the appointment of its 'Curator' in the fourth century aimed at making sure that honest men held this position, and that any dishonest Curator should not do too much damage to the system of distribution by his misbehaviour.

In 365 there was a law instructing that the corn left over

from the previous year's corn tribute must be used up before the corn tribute for the new year might be distributed, and this requirement was repeated in 396.[49] These laws were probably to prevent waste, but they seem also to be aimed at preventing fraud by the curators of the granaries. Otherwise they would probably have kept what was left of the old year's corn, and depending how much of it was left, when the new corn arrived, have purloined it either to use it for themselves, or sell it on the free market, and used the confusion in accounting that would result from using both years' corn tributes at the same time to hide more long-term fraud if they were unscrupulous.

The concentration of laws concerning the curators of state storehouses around the last three years of the fourth century (397- the year of the second law on when the new corn could be started on - to 400) may suggest particularly serious corruption at that time, which cannot have made life any more comfortable for the authorities in charge of seeing that the people got their corn at the time of the crisis of the Gildonic War.

The law of 397 about the curators of the state storehouses orders them to provide detailed accounts of disbursements and receipts to the Vicarius of Rome, and the Praefectus Annonae, at the end of each year, and says that if the accounts are satisfactory the curator can continue in his post until he has served up to five years. The other law is from the year 400, and states that the heads of the state storehouses can only serve for one year, and instructs that accounts of the old issue of public supplies shall not be inserted in the account of the new supplies. (That would make fraud harder, since the two accounts now had to be kept separate.) These heads of state storehouses could only serve a further year if the investigations of the old year's account showed them to have been faithful and responsible.

The next stage in the administration of the provision of bread

for the distributions that would have caused rioting by their absence was to see that the corn in the city granaries became bread on the 'gradus' (steps) to be given to the people. This brings us to the guild of the bakers (Pistores). The laws of the Theodosian Code concerning the bakers fall into two categories; those aimed at maintaining the numbers of bakers within the guild, and those aimed at preventing fraud on the part of the bakers.

The Naviculariі and the Pistores are both the subject of far more laws aimed at keeping their numbers to a maximum than any other guilds concerned with the corn supply and the bread distributions of Rome. But of these two guilds, the Pistores are the subject of twice as many of those laws in the fourth century. Although some of the extra laws concerning the numbers of Pistores and their obligations concern the condemning of minor criminals to the bakeries belonging to the Pistores, there are still more laws concerning the Pistores than concerning the Naviculariі for the fourth century.[50] This would seem to indicate that being a Pistor was a far more onerous burden, even, than being a Navicularius, and it is probable that to be a Pistor was a less honourable trade than to be a Navicularius.

A law of 365 says that Naviculariі evading their duties and coming to undeserved honours/office were to be re-attached to the guild, indicating that absconding Naviculariі sought high office as an escape route from their duties, whereas the only escape route for a baker which is mentioned in the fourth century laws on the subject is taking Holy Orders and entering the Christian priesthood. The law mentioning this (364 A.D.) says that bakers taking Holy Orders to escape their duties will be recalled to the guild.[51] Like the Naviculariі, the Pistores had land tied to their guild, and people buying or inheriting it had to become bakers themselves, if they were not Senators or civil servants (Officiales). The latter two groups

a law of 364 says that only 200,000 modii of good unmixed corn was to be sold to the bakers, and a law of 380 instructs that if anything is embezzled from the granaries of Rome, the bakers are to make up for the loss, paying back in corn, or in bronze or lead or other things, if they cannot pay in corn.[56]

Some other laws show the suspicions of the authorities: a law of 365 orders that bread shall be distributed on the 'gradus' (steps, where the people collected their daily bread ration - they were set up all over the city and records kept at each of them showed who in the locality of each 'gradus' was eligible for bread) and not in the bakeries, that is in the open and not in secret. That law was in January; in April the same instructions were repeated, and this time it is definitely specified as an anti-fraud measure.[57]

As the dole bread could not have satisfied all the needs of the population for bread, the bakers must also have made bread for the free market (hence the law preventing bakers from giving the worst bread to the people), and it may be that the free market bread was sold at the same 'gradus' as the dole bread was distributed, with the different qualities of bread being put on different steps, because a law of 364 forbids the transfer of bread from one step to another.[58] The bakers were obviously not in a particularly trusted position, and it is little wonder that the laws promised no mercy for people who had tried to avoid being bakers.[59]

However, while one could be forced to become a baker just by marrying a baker's daughter, or by buying some of the guild's land,[60] the laws did not bear down on the Pistores unremittingly; for instance, minors were not forced to take up their fathers' profession until they were twenty years old. They would also have benefitted from the privileges of corporation/guilds in general, such as exemption from ordinary 'munera publica'.[61]

The Pistores referred to so far have been the owners of bakeries, rather than their subordinates. The fact that minor criminals were condemned to the bakeries cannot have done much for the image of the owners as honest men, and probably increased the reluctance of people to serve as members of the guild.

These minor criminals, who included people who had claimed dole bread fraudulently (a law of 370 orders that 'Actores', 'Procurators', and slaves of Senators illegally claiming 'panis gradilis' will be attached to the bakery they defrauded)[62] were probably set to work turning the corn that the Pistores drew from the granaries into flour, until the building of water-mills on the Janiculum Hill made this task obsolete. The laws in the Theodosian Code concerning the condemnation of minor criminals to this task are concentrated around the year 364, and include one excluding those assigned to bakeries from general pardons.[63]

According to Chastagnol, the bakers paid a deposit for the corn they drew from the granaries for the distributions of bread, and, when the bread was distributed, the people receiving the bread paid a price below the free market one which was sent to the 'Arca Frumentaria', from which the deposit was repaid to the baker.[64]

The charge to the people for the distribution of bread brings us to the last stage in that chain leading from the cornfields of Africa to the 'gradus' of Rome. The payment for the bread was a change from the free corn of the Early Empire, but it did not continue throughout the century. It came and went. The people did not complain at paying a price for the bread, probably because, when they were receiving the corn, they had had to pay for their corn to be turned into flour and baked into bread, so that they were not any worse off. The payments may have arisen from tips demanded by officials handing

out the dole, and later been made official.

Aurelian, the third century Emperor who replaced the corn dole with the bread dole, according to Chastagnol, may have reduced the dole to keep the dole free, giving the recipients two pounds of good Roman bread a day. By 369 the recipients were paying for their distribution bread, but they were getting four pounds of it, although it was poor quality bread. In 369 Valentinian I changed the amount of dole to three pounds of good bread, and made it free again. By the end of the century it was being paid for again.[65] Presumably, when the 'plebs frumentaria' were not expected to pay for their bread, the officials at the 'gradus' would have noted the handing out of the bread by the bakers, and, when it was over, authorised the repayment of the deposit to the baker.

The large number of Theodosian Code laws concerning the stages by which Rome's corn was delivered to the city and turned into bread for the distributions shows the overwhelming pre-eminence of the bread distribution in relation to distributions of other food and drink. Nevertheless before moving on to 'circenses', it is necessary to look at the other distributions. The olive-oil tribute to Rome for the oil distributions came from Africa and Spain in the main. Members of the same guild of Naviculariі that carried the corn carried the oil from Africa. There was also a guild of Spanish Naviculariі, who had the same privileges as their African counterparts, and a law of 324 forbids the placing of extra burdens on the Spanish Naviculariі. According to Chastagnol there were the same controls on the oil, when it arrived at Ostia/Portus, as there were on the corn.[66]

The oil was levied in the provinces in the same way as the corn, but once it arrived at Rome it was not so great a burden as the corn to those involved in its distribution. It was already the finished product when it reached the store-housesof Rome, so that it merely had to be drawn by the owners of the 2,300 'Mensae Oleariae',[67]

and sold at a low price. The 'Mensae Oleariae' were evidently fairly profitable, because a law of 328 orders that any Oil Table that falls vacant can be sold by the Officium of the Praefectus Annonae for 20 Folles, and allows that owners could bequeath tables in their wills (not something one would want to do if it was a burden). Presumably the Oil Table owners drew oil from the store-houses, and gave it to the entitled plebs, receiving a tip from each recipient, but not having to pay anything themselves, or they had a monopoly in free-market oil.[68]

The relative paucity of laws concerning the oil supply indicates either that the people would not be too troublesome in its absence, or that the system ran relatively smoothly, or both. Symmachus' Relatio 35 shows that there were oil shortages, so that presumably the people did not regard the distributions as a matter of life and death, as they did not riot about it, although olive oil was a useful commodity for washing, lighting and eating.

The provision of corn and oil to the city of Rome during the fourth century came under the authority of the Praefectus Annonae, who was at first independent of the Praefectus Urbi, but later came under his authority, as the early Fifth Century document, the Notitia Dignitatum, shows. Chastagnol suggests the change took place around the year 331,[69] but even then the two civil service departments (Officia) under the Prefects remained distinct, and a law of 365 forbade the involvement of members of the Praefectus Urbi's Officium in the corn supply, presumably with a view to preventing fraud in the Officia.[70]

The other two distributions in Rome, those of cheap wine and meat, mainly pork until the Fifth Century, came directly under the authority of the Praefectus Urbi. This was because the materials for the distributions were levied in Italy and not in the provinces. The meat distributions were not a particularly large element in the plebeian

diet, and only took place for five months a year, the other seven months being spent by the guild of Suarii in collecting the animals to provide the meat. Chastagnol states that each recipient received five pounds of meat during each of the five months,[71] and its value in keeping the people happy must have been limited in ordinary circumstances, except as a change from bread. However, it could be useful in the event of a corn famine, as shown in the events of 396 (see section on the meat distributions in chapter 3), allowing the authorities to keep the people fed, until corn could be brought to Rome from one source or another.

The Imperial authorities were concerned enough about the meat supply of Rome that they kept an eye on the numbers of Suarii, and a law to the Praetorian Prefect of Italy and Africa in 334 orders that official to recall Suarii who had got illegal exemptions (all exemptions being illegal for them) from their duties in the presence of the Roman people.[72] The reason that the members of that guild might not be particularly keen to serve was that, after the Pistores, they were the guild most suspected of malpractice.

It was their responsibility to go out and collect the pigs from the landowners ordered to provide animals for Rome's meat distributions, and this was all very well. However, because of the possibility of 'Adaeratio' (commuting the tax from one in kind to one in the money that the animal or crops were worth), the Suarius immediately became responsible for money. At first he was allowed to set the 'Adaeratio', or commuted payment, himself, judging by eye the value of the pig that had been asked of the landowner, but which the landowner would rather pay money for than lose. The money so collected would be used by the Suarius to buy a pig at some point on the way back to Rome, which could replace the one that the landowner did not want to lose.

This of course made it possible for unscrupulous Suarii to

make quite a bit of money at the expense of the unfortunate landowners, and so they came to be regarded as rapacious, even if most of the guild might be entirely innocent; under Julian the Apostate, the system was changed so that the local 'Curiales' in the Italian provinces had the responsibility to collect 'Adaeratio' payments for the Pork levy,[73] and the Suarii were freed of the opportunity of being thought rapacious. Nonetheless, in 389 the Suarii had their freedom from other 'munera' confirmed, presumably to encourage them not to desert their duties, and in 397 there was a law enforcing and reiterating the hereditary nature of their service.[74]

The wine for the cheap wine distribution was also levied from the landowners of Italy, but because the wine was taken to Rome by the landowners themselves, the authorities at the Imperial court merely had to set the amounts owed by all those affected, and keep a record of who failed to deliver his tribute, so that such people could be prosecuted later, or pardoned if circumstances had made delivery impossible. According to Chastagnol 'Adaeratio' to gold was possible from 356, at rates fixed by the Imperial court, probably at above the market price in Rome.[75] Wine is a bulky commodity to transport overland, so that 'Adaeratio' must have been fairly popular. As the state got the wine free and sold it to the people, it made quite a profit and this was invested in the Arca Vinaria, from which funds were drawn for the building and maintenance of public buildings and public works in the city, when the 'Vectigalia' (indirect taxes, like the 'octroi') did not suffice.[76]

The people did riot when there were wine shortages (leading to higher prices), as has been seen in the previous chapter, but there were no real long-term solutions to this, except to keep an eye on the free-market price of wine, to which at least from the reign of Valentinian I the price of the cheap wine was linked,[77] and put pressure

on wine producers and wine sellers to keep down their prices (though this could cause an even greater scarcity). The free market in wine was mainly in the hands of the Tabernarii, and a careful watch was kept upon them, as is shown by the Edict of Tarracius Bassus (see above, in section on duties of the Urban Cohorts).[78] They could easily buy up wine when it was cheap, and hoard against a time of scarcity, as it kept well, and then sell it at vastly inflated prices if the authorities did not watch them. Then there really would be riots.

There was one other item of nutrition that the authorities saw that the people got, and that was water. However, apart from seeing that the aqueducts were kept in repair, the authorities just had to let the water flow down the works of their ancestors. While the water could be piped to the ground floor residences of the well-off, it could not be piped to the upper floors where the plebeians lived, and so the ordinary people got their water from the public fountains;[79] but even that was clean water from springs, and not the filthy polluted water of the Tiber.

The authorities did keep an eye on those who had water piped to their homes to ensure that the pipes leading between their houses and the local 'castellum' (where water from the aqueduct collected) did not draw off water at a faster rate than permitted, or, even worse, draw directly from the aqueduct itself. As the numerous aqueducts of the City must have provided more than enough water for everyone, and for functions such as supplying the Baths, and later in the century driving the Watermills on the Janiculum (a law of 398 prescribes a fine of 5 lbs of silver for anyone asking for water from the aqueducts driving the watermills)[80] the rules about where pipes could tap Rome's water supply and how much water could be taken were probably for reasons of engineering. Rome being built on seven hills, the water pressure must be kept up in order that water can be supplied to

the more elevated sections of the city. A law of 389 states what size of pipe can be used by those entitled to have water piped to their homes, and in what places the pipes can enter the water supply.[81]

The people are not recorded to have ever rioted about their water supply in the fourth century, so that there was presumably no water shortage during the period. However, the authorities did take care to keep the system flowing, and paid for repairs to the aqueducts by a system of 'Vectigalia' (according to Chastagnol not the same 'vectigalia' as in Frontinus' time, but made up of the 'octroi' and a tax on the Peregrini),[82] while outside the city landowners with an aqueduct flowing across their land were excused ordinary 'munera' in order that they could devote all their energies to keeping the aqueduct in repair. Failure to do this led to confiscation of the property concerned.[83] The law specifying that also forbade the planting of trees within 15 feet of an aqueduct on either side.

2) Circenses (and other amenities, and measures to prevent fire, floods etc.)

A. Circenses

The value of the Circus, Gladiatorial Games, and the Theatre as places where public opinion expressed itself was well known to the authorities, and has been mentioned in the previous chapter. The Games were important as opportunities for the Populus Romanus to let off steam and get excitement without disturbing the public peace. The people of Rome, being city-dwellers, did not make good recruits for the army, especially at a period when the Imperial authorities were coming to believe that barbarians made good recruits.

It is possible that Rome was exempted from providing recruits for the army, especially as there were no census records for the city, due to the failure to carry out the census of Diocletian, which the revolt of Maxentius caused.[84] There was a law sent to the people of Rome

in the fourth century relating to the army, but it concerned the harbouring of deserters - it did provide that the penalty should be to hand back the deserter, and two pounds of gold, or two suitable recruits, making it possible for Roman plebeians to be sent into the army, but it is more likely that the law was directed at the better off, and that the suitable recruits would come from their country tenants.[85]

The main point is that the plebeians would have fairly dull lives, without the occasional opportunity to let off steam, and it was better that they got their excitement vicariously at the Games than by rioting in the streets. The long-term efforts of the authorities to give the people nothing to riot about, that is their efforts to see the people fed and see that they were not treated unjustly, and that they lived in houses and 'insulae' that were not likely to be destroyed by fire, flood, or jerry-building, would have come to nothing if the people had been so bored and frustrated that they took the least excuse to riot. The lavish Games, in Circus, Amphitheatre, and Theatre, supplied the vicarious excitement that meant the plebeians only rioted seriously when they needed to, and riots on less serious matters, like the price of wine (which the authorities tried to keep down in any case) were not so whole-hearted that the Prefect of the City could not put them down with a few carefully chosen arrests (see chapter 3, section II.3).

The Games were not, however, just a matter of necessity. They were also important for displaying social position, on the part of the Senators, who provided most of the Games, and Imperial power, and generosity, when imperial Games were concerned. As well as being aimed at impressing their peers, in the case of Senators, and impressing everyone, in the case of the Emperor, the lavishness of the Games was aimed at winning the favour of the populace of Rome to whoever was holding the Games, and the loyalty of the people to the regime. Although it is not directly concerned with Games, a statement in a Relatio of Symmachus

which concerned Praetextatus, shows that some Senators tried to reinforce the loyalty of the plebs to the Emperor:

> "Praeterea quae apud plebem locutus est,
> ut cunctos in amorem bonorum temporum provocaret"
>
> (Symm. Rel. 24.2)[86]

The authorities were concerned that the people of Rome should have their Games, but the social importance of the Games to those who had to provide them was the cause of two problems, completely opposed to each other, but, like the opposite sides of a coin, complementary. The problems were of too much enthusiasm and too little on the part of the Senators who had to give the Ludi (Games) and the Munera (Gladiatorial Games, in this context).

The problems were linked. In Rome there was no upper limit on spending on Games, in Constantinople there was. This was because the Eastern Emperor's normal residence was at Constantinople, whereas the highest ranking people normally at Rome were the Senators. The Eastern Emperor could not afford to allow the Senators of Constantinople to spend limitlessly on Games, lest they throw his own into the shadows. The Western Emperor did not reside at Rome, and so was not associated with the Games given at the State's expense. Thus when he promised Games, as happened in the prefecture of Symmachus, he could provide Games of greater splendour than any Senator could afford, because he knew he would not have to provide Games in his own name until he wished to promise more, while his eastern colleague had to preside at Games regularly given at public expense, when in his capital.

As the people of Constantinople would have assumed that these regular Games were provided by the Emperor, and expected his Games to be the most lavish of those held in the city, provision of the regular 'Ludi' at public expense would have been rather expensive for the State, if there was not an upper spending limit on the Games that senators of Constantinople, who were the competition, were required to hold. At

Rome, since the Emperor was not under pressure, Senators could be as lavish as they wanted; the Emperor could match them.[87] Some Senators were lavish. Symmachus, who is said to have had a middling income compared to some senators,[88] went to great trouble to obtain horses for his son's Praetorian Games, sending letters to his friends in Spain and elsewhere.[89] He also obtained crocodiles for these 'Ludi', which were held in 401, but these refused to eat and were unfit by the time of the Games.[90] In a letter concerning these Games, he says:

"de Sicilia...dudum circi et scaenae artifices navigasse"

(Ep. VI.33)

In the 390s he also arranged his son's Quaestorian 'Munus' (Gladiatorial Games), but he complains of the expense of this,[91] and he suffered some misfortune at the time, such as the suicide of some Saxons before they were to have fought in the arena, and the late arrival of wild beasts for the 'Munus'.[92]

Symmachus's complaints about expense are connected with both problems. Some senators spent so much on Games to show their families' pre-eminence that less well-off senators could not compete. These poorer senators, even if they wanted to hold the Games they were required to hold, could not meet the average standard of Games, because excessively lavish Games kept pushing it up. The fact that they would get very little approval from the people for their best efforts would tend to turn an honour into a burden.

Small wonder then that as well as being penalised for not holding their Games, senators were also penalised for failing to turn up at their Games. They might not be able to face the prospect of the people jeering, and if they lived in the provinces, as many of Clarissimate rank did in the fourth century, preferring to be a big fish in a small provincial pond rather than small fry at Rome, they might be doubly unwilling to go to Rome. In fact, senators tended

not to organise the Games of their Praetorship and (sometimes - it was possible to be a Praetor, without being a Quaestor) Quaestorship, as the case of Symmachus' son shows: the father often did the arranging, especially as the son might be under-age to do it himself.

The Quaestorship and the Praetorships were largely powerless positions by the Fourth Century, and for the most part existed for foisting the obligation to hold Games on to families that wanted to get their sons into the Senate.[93] Therefore it did not matter if a senator held his Praetorship when in his teens, or even younger, and some did.[94] The 'Magister Census', whose office was near the Senate House in Rome, had records of the resources and property of everyone of Clarissimate rank (not merely those of traditional senatorial family but the families of senior civil servants and army commanders, and others who also had the rank of 'Clarissimus'), and from these records it was determined who would hold the Praetorship for any year, and so undertake the burden of holding Praetorian Games.[95]

The problems of expense posed to less well-off candidates for the Quaestorship and Praetorship by the over-spending of their richer peers is shown in two letters of Symmachus, one a Relatio, the other an ordinary letter complaining about the cost of his son's Quaestorial Games. To take the latter first; as well as bearing the burden of providing the Games, it seems that Senators were being charged tolls on the animals they had brought to the city; no wonder then that Symmachus complains about this practice (which is probably irregular, or he would have borne it with more stoicism). Even if it was not normal to put this additional burden on those providing Games, the fact that it happened shows that the holding of Games could sometimes be an unfairly heavy burden.[96]

Relatio 8 shows directly the problem of undue expenditure on Games, as it is about Valentinian II's restrictions on expenditure

designed to prevent less well-off senators being overburdened by having to rival their richer colleagues:

> "For when unfair competition had overwhelmed senatorial duties with heavy expense, you have given back the old sanity to our behaviour and our lavishing out, so that neither will insignificant shows have an adverse effect on the reputation of colleagues unequal in wealth, nor through modesty of resources will those trying beyond their means be swamped by an unwise outpouring of money ...The old form of choosing who is to give their opinions is restored, so that fortune of honours, not spending on Games, will decide the chief position of each member in decisions...Thrift in holding Games and rank in the Senate will be preserved."
>
> (Symm. Rel. 8. 1-2) [97]

The section of the Relatio that follows deals with the wealth quota which determines whether a senator is liable to hold single or repeated Games, or, to put it another way, whether he will have to hold the Quaestorship as well as the Praetorship. There were only two Quaestorial 'Munera' (Gladiatorial Games) a year, compared to several times that number of Praetorian 'Ludi' (Chariot Races and Theatrical Performances), so that only candidates for the senate from the richest and most prestigious families would have to undertake both offices, with their attached Games. As the Praetorian 'Ludi' were the qualification for the Senate for most senators, it is not surprising that Symmachus complains of the cost of his son's Quaestorial 'Munus' but not of the later Praetorian 'Ludi'.[98]

> "For with none dissenting it was decreed what limit shall be set to spending on Games held once or more often, what mean will be applied in equipping them, what limit to spending on Gladiatorial Games, what limit on theatrical entertainments will be appropriate, what liberty in expense those who are present for their duties will merit, what penalty the insulting behaviour of those who absent themselves ought to incur."
>
> (Symm. Rel. 8.3) [99]

The lavishness of expenditure by the richer senators, which made life difficult for the poorer senators when it came to holding Games,

the enthusiastic side of the coin, to use the image referred to earlier, appears in that passage, but the 'contumacia absentium' also appears. The authorities went to great lengths to ensure senators held the Games they were expected to, and that they turned up to them in person.

The problem for the authorities seems to have been more one of getting senators actually to do the work of organising Games than of getting them to pay for the Games. If a provincial senator did not want to leave home to organise the Games for his magistracy, the Fiscus would pay for the Games itself and send him the bill, also exacting a fine for non-attendance.[100] A law of Constantine which is mentioned by a reiteration of Valentinian I in 365 established this fine for senators who failed to come to Rome to hold their Games, except in the case of minors under the age of 20. The wording of the Constantinian law suggests the fine was already in existence, though it does not say what it is.[101]

However, a law of 354, under Constantius II, sets the fine as 50,000 modii of wheat to be paid to the city granaries.[102] As the Constantinian law indicates, some account was taken of tender years. A minor under 20, living away from Rome, did not have to come to Rome to organise his Games, and anybody nominated Quaestor under the age of 16 did not have to attend his Games if he lived in the provinces. However, once a senator was old enough, he could not even escape his obligation to exhibit Games through imperial exemption, as a law of 397 shows.[103]

The authorities not only concerned themselves with the senators who were to hold the Games, but also with those who would be performing, so that the senators, and the Emperor, if he was the holder of the Games, would have the people to organise, and also animals. There were laws against the abduction/misappropriation of horses

provided by Emperors, Praetors, and Consuls for their Games, and only Spanish horses could be sold after the Games (which is probably why Symmachus tries to get horses from his friends in Spain, so that he can sell them afterwards, and cut his expenses on his son's Praetorian Games, see above).[104] 'Palmati' and 'Hermogeni' horses (the latter perhaps Greek) had to be looked after until death.[105] The authorities also saw that the horses were fed. Campania had to provide beans to the faction stables at Rome.[106]

Livestock were not the only concern of the authorities. A law of 380 outlines the only circumstances in which actresses could be released from their (at that time) very dishonourable profession.[107] Another law issued with it says that anyone abducting an actress from Rome is liable to punishment.[108] This desperation to hold onto the services of actresses is also reflected in Ammianus' jibe that when other 'peregrini' were expelled from the city, during a corn crisis, three thousand 'saltatrices' (dancing girls) were allowed to remain in the city. Such were the worries of the authorities that the people would riot.[109]

A law of 381 orders that participants in Games who are to be punished should be punished only through Circus combats (circense certamen).[110] Before moving on from the authorities' efforts to keep the people happy with Games, it would be as well to recall the law of Constans ordering the Prefect of the City to preserve temples from which the people's entertainments start. This shows the Emperor's concern to keep the people's entertainment just as it had always been, even though he was himself a Christian. However, later in the century, Theodosius sent a law to the Praetorian Prefect of the Orient banning spectacles on Sundays, which may have been extended to Rome when Theodosius defeated the usurper Eugenius, in whose reign Theodosius' law was issued.[111] It is unlikely the people would have complained.

They would have been almost all Christians by the proscription of paganism in the 390s, when the ban on Sunday spectacles would have been brought in, if it was.

B. Other 'Curae' of the Roman Authorities

a) Baths

Another area in which the authorities made provision for the people of Rome was that of the Baths. There was no need for the authorities to build new suites of Baths, as Emperors had bestowed them on the city from the first century to the fourth, the most recent examples being Diocletian and Constantine. It was more a matter of seeing that there was fuel for the Baths than seeing that they existed. The oil, which people used then in place of soap, was provided to the plebeians by means of the oil distribution. The buildings themselves, at least in the case of the major Baths, like those of Trajan, Caracella, and Diocletian, were built on such a monumental scale that their construction would have to be very sound for them to remain standing in the first place, and they probably did not require too much maintenance. The heating for the Baths was provided by a levy of wood in Campania, which was transported[112] by the sixty richest members of the guild of Naviculariі, as a law of 369 mentions.

b) Skills and Employment

The authorities did not merely concern themselves with the Guilds/Corporations that dealt with the food supply and other amenities affecting the entire city, but were also concerned lest skills should be lacking, and a law of Constantine exempts the members of the following guilds from 'munera', so that they can teach their children their crafts: architects, makers of panelled ceilings, plasterers, carpenters, physicians, stone-cutters, silversmiths, builders, vets, stone-masons, gilders of arms, step-makers, painters, sculptors, engravers, joiners, statuaries, workers in mosaics, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, marble masons,

gilders, founders, dyers in purple, layers of tessalated stones, goldsmiths, mirror-makers, carriage-makers, directors of the distribution of water supplies (hydraulic engineers), glass-workers, workers in ivory, fullers, potters, plumbers, and furriers.[113]

As can be observed, a fair number of those trades were luxury ones, but a few were important to the needy as well as to the rich, like the physicians and the potters. The bread distributions were not a dole for the unemployed, but for anyone who qualified for it, and it is possible that few of the 'plebs frumentaria' were wholly idle. The bread distributions would support one adult more than comfortably, but he had to eat food other than bread to get a reasonably balanced diet, and he had sometimes to pay for the distribution bread, and if he had a family he had to feed it;* therefore he needed some income.

Having a patron would have done some good and some clients could survive, unemployed, providing that they had a generous patron and the disinclination to seek employment. Nonetheless the range of crafts in Constantine's list is a reminder that a city the size of Rome needed a lot of services, including some that ordinary towns did not have, and some people might have supplemented their meagre income from their patrons by hawking and vending on the streets. Ammianus mentions the plebs gathering round cooked-meat kitchens in his second satirical passage on the people of Rome,[114] and this might be one of such service industries.[115] Other work might be provided by the authorities through public building work. The builders mentioned in the Constantinian law might have taken on casual labour, if a Prefect of the City was particularly into public building as Lampadius (365-6) was, even if his unorthodox methods of getting building materials

* He also had to pay the rent.

eventually enraged the people.[116] Although in the last quarter of the fourth century the Praefectus Urbi was not allowed to undertake new building in Rome without Imperial approval (nor were other 'iudices'), and private builders had to use their own materials without using materials from old buildings and tombs,[117] public building work (by the Emperor himself) might provide some extra employment.

Two letters of Symmachus to Valentinian II and another private letter of his[118] concern the building of a bridge and the Basilica of St. Paul's-without-the-Walls at Imperial expense. The building of a bridge is not an everyday occurrence anywhere (although Valentinian I restored one, which he let Symmachus' father dedicate)[119] unlike, for instance, the rebuilding of a collapsed 'insula' or the ordinary building of a house, so that Imperial building projects, in that they caused a fluctuation in the demand for the services of building, which any slaves the builder kept could not have met, must have occasioned the use of casual labour.

Another occasion on which casual labour might have been employed may have been the arrival of Constantius II's obelisk and its erection in the Circus Maximus. According to Ammianus, who describes the process by which the obelisk was lifted into position:

> "After this all that remained to do was to raise it into place, a thing which was thought scarcely, no not even scarcely, possible. But it was achieved, in this manner: long beams were gathered, raised and arranged perpendicularly (so that you could see a grove of derricks as it were) and long thick ropes were tied to them, looking like manifold threads, hiding the sky with their excessive density. To these were attached the column itself engraved with written characters, and slowly it was drawn upright through the empty air, and it hung there for a long time with many thousands of men turning wheels like millstones, and eventually settled in place in the middle of the Circus."
>
> (A.M. XVII. 4.15)[120]

Who are those 'hominum milibus multis'? Obelisk-erecting is not a day-to-day occurrence, so there would not have been a guild of

obelisk-erectors, and it is unlikely that at a time when slavery was in decline, and the strong barbarians who would be suitable for this sort of work were being recruited into the Imperial Army, not turned into slaves, that there would be thousands of slaves to spare. Therefore the many thousands rotating the 'tamquam molendinarias' were plebeians, probably under the supervision of people experienced in lifting loads with rope and pulley, like the dockers of Ostia.

The plebeians could probably also get work picking crops in the area round Rome at harvest, as it would not be economic to have slaves who could only be used at harvest time. As the arrival of the corn fleet at Ostia/Portus in the spring would have meant a sudden need for people to unload the ships, the Guild of *Saccarii* may have taken on extra men to cope with the seasonal glut of work. Those could, however, have been recruited from the unemployed of Ostia. As the end of the sailing season would not have affected the traffic of corn barges up the Tiber - that traffic would have been even throughout the year, except in a corn crisis - the *Saccarii* of the city would not have felt the same glut, and employment in that area would have been more even.

Public building and the various seasonal forms of employment were normal, and do not indicate a special concern on the part of the Emperors* and the authorities in Rome to see that the people were employed; and there is no account of the people rioting over unemployment in the fourth century. Nor did the authorities fear the devil finding work for idle hands. The pattern of daily life in ancient Rome meant that even the people who were working had plenty of leisure. Although some worked in the afternoon (probably people working in shaded places like workshops), the shops closed at midday for the Mediterranean siesta, re-opening in the late afternoon, and many people probably also took the afternoon off. This did not mean that they had a shorter working day than now, since they rose at dawn to make the most of the daylight, and

* See however Vespasian in the first century

in summer that could mean seven and a half hours work done before the siesta.[121]

c) Weights and Measures

There remain three areas where the authorities tried to prevent situations that might cause the people to complain or riot. One was the control of weights and measures, the second measures concerning fire, flood, and collapse of buildings, and the third health care and, perhaps, education. According to A. Chastagnol there are few weights and measures with the stamp of the Prefect of the City surviving from the fourth century, and there is more evidence of the Prefect's involvement with this field in the fifth and sixth centuries. However, he balances this by mention of Ammianus XXVII.9,10, in which Praetextatus sets up Ponderaria throughout the city with the standard weights and measures, so that fraud could be detected more easily. Although it was unlikely that a riot would ensue from someone being given short measure, such a thing might cause a minor disturbance which could ignite into a riot over some other grievance in a time of tension; though any government is going to concern itself with weights and measures, lest it get cheated itself.

d) Natural Disasters etc.

The measures designed to prevent fires and the collapse of buildings were mentioned in section II.e. of the third chapter, but the concern of the authorities in the fourth century about fire is shown by the demolition of the balconies and lean-tos that infringed the minimum distance allowed between buildings by Praetextatus,[122] and their need to be concerned about collapse of buildings is shown by the riot that followed the collapse of a building in the 390s.[123] Flood and earthquake were unpreventable, but in the case of the former there is only one mentioned in the fourth century.

There was a 'curator' of the Tiber (banks and channel) and

the sewers who had the rank of 'Comes' (Count) by the time of the Notitia Dignitatum, and who was then fourth in rank among the magistrates 'sub dispositione Praefecti Urbi'.[124] As for earthquakes, there is no literary evidence for any happening at Rome itself in the fourth century, although the Theatre of Pompey needed repair from earthquake damage some time during the joint reign of Honorius and Arcadius (died 408), which would of course provide some employment opportunities for people in Rome.[125]

e) Education and Health Care

Finally there was the provision, at Imperial expense, of Doctors and Professors. The latter, professors of literature, probably did not have anything to do with the 'plebs frumentaria', and were merely there to ensure that the upper classes were educated into supporting the system, as had originally been the idea behind setting them up. The only evidence that might be balanced against this is from Satire III of Juvenal, who was writing in the second century, and concerns Codrus, who lost the nothing he had in a fire. That nothing included some books, what is more Greek books, but he might have been a freedman who had been educated before or during his slavery; in any case, as it is part of a satire, it cannot be taken too seriously.[126]

In the case of the doctors (called: Archiatri), the situation was different. The Archiatri obtained exemption from 'Munera Publica', as did their wives and children, and they and their children were also exempt from military service, and billeting ('hospites recipere'). (Professors also had the same privileges.)[127] Those privileges were granted, or confirmed, by Constantine in 333. In 368 Valentinian I issued a law that the Archiatris' job was to look after the poor, because they were salaried, unlike other doctors.[128] The law also stated in what situations Archiatri could receive donations from their patients:

from those they had cured, not from the sick and dying who might promise money to be cured.

Although this health care might seem fairly revolutionary, it was on a very limited scale, one Archiatrus per region (in addition to three Archiatri on special duty at the House of the Vestals, the Xystus - a place for athletes - and at Ostia, respectively), not really a national health service, unless a National Health system had London catered for by only 84 doctors for its 6,000,000+ population. Not that it mattered a great deal. Doctors, then, probably killed almost as many as they cured, even if the Archiatri were among the twenty best in the western Empire, and might be slightly less dangerous to their patients than their lesser brethren.

The people are not recorded to have rioted over health care in the fourth century, and it was more a matter of the kindness of the Emperor's heart, or at least his wish to appear kind-hearted, and to have the honour of Rome, and of the most distinguished doctors of the age, in mind, that the Archiatri were assigned to look after the people of Rome and draw a public salary.

Conclusion

The people of Rome, by their actions and their very existence, had a profound impact on the administration of their city in the fourth century, and they may not necessarily have known they were making such an impact.

Although the people could not shake the state, backed as it was by the overwhelming force of the Army, the Emperor and the Prefects he appointed to govern the city took notice of the needs of the populace and the grievances they expressed whether legitimately in the Circus or illegally by riot, and treated the latter with a minimum of force in their suppression. The motivation of the authorities had two sides. On the one hand they feared riots which reflected badly on their administration, and also feared loss of face through using violence against the people of what the Emperor Valentinian called the 'communis omnium patria'. On the other hand Emperors gained prestige from a harmonious visit to Rome, and officials gained it from having a trouble-free period of office with acclamations of praise from the people at the Games. This contributed to the care for the corn supply and the peace of the city, while the general desire of upper class Romans for prestige contributed to the magnificence of the Games which the plebeians enjoyed.

Finally, to put this conclusion into perspective, Emperors in the fourth century, as we have seen, showed great respect to the people of Rome as to no other citizens of the Empire. St. Ambrose complained that whereas the people of Rome were not punished for burning the houses of Prefects of the City, some Christians who had burnt a synagogue in the East were being punished. Another example of an Emperor using different standards is that of Constantius II threatening the people of Alexandria, to get the surrender of Athanasius, but having Liberius smuggled out of Rome by night to avoid a riot.

Being away from Rome meant that Emperors did not have to release the Praetorians against the people, as the riots did not threaten the ruler's tenure of the imperial throne, and so they were more inclined to listen to the populace and see to its needs for altruistic and patriotic reasons than their predecessors in earlier centuries. This increased the impact of the populace in the running of fourth century Rome to a level even greater than it might have been otherwise.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Et quoniam mirari posse quosdam peregrinos existimo, haec lecturos forsitan (si contegerit), quam ob rem cum oratio ad ea monstranda deflexerit quae Romae geruntur, nihil praeter seditiones narratur et tabernas et vilitates harum similis alias, summatim causas perstringam, nusquam a veritate sponte propria digressurus.

2. Ideo urbs venerabilis, post superbas efferatarum gentium cervices oppressas, latasque leges, fundamenta libertatis et retinacula sempiterna, velut frugi parens et prudens et dives, Caesaribus tamquam liberis suis regenda patrimonii permisit. Et olim licet otiosae sunt tribus, pacataeque centuriae, et nulla suffragiorium certamina, sed Pompiliani redierit securitas temporis, per omnes tamen quot orae sunt partesque terrarum, ut domina suscipitur et regina, et ubique patrum reverenda cum auctoritate canities, populique Romani nomen circumspectum et verecundum.

3. Libanius Ep. 983

4. A.M. XXVIII, 4, 14

5. A.M. XXVIII, 1

6. A.M. XVI, 10, 13-14

7. A.M. XXVII, 3, 14

8. J. Matthews: 'The letters of Symmachus' in Latin Literature of the Fourth Century (1974) J. W. Binns (Ed.)

9. Symm. Ep. VI, 37

10. In his Monumenta Germaniae Historica edition of Symmachus' works

11. An example of concern about potential famines is Symm. Ep. IV, 74, although Seeck's dating of 383 may be a year out; cf. J. R. Palanque, 'Famines à Rome à la fin du IVe siècle' (Revue des Études Anciennes 1931)

Chapter 1 notes

12. Symm. Rel. 9

13. Symm. Rel. 23

14. Symm. Rel. 10

15. Symm. Rel. 9

16. Symm. Rel. 33

17. Jerome Ep. 23

18. Zosimus II. 29

19. cf. F. Paschoud, Cinq Études sur Zosime (1975) especially the essay entitled Zosime 2, 29 et la version paienne du conversion de Constantin

20. Panegyrici Latini IV

21. Panegyrici Latini XIV

22. Panegyric of Theodosius by Pacatus Panegyrici Latini II (XII)

23. cum se melioribus addens exemplis civem gereret terrore remoto, alternos cum plebe iocos dilectaque passus iurgia, patricias domos privataque passim visere deposito dignatus limina fastu.

24. A.M. XVI, 10, 14

25. Jerome Ep. XXII Paulinus of Nola XIII, 11, 6

26. Jerome Ep. XXIII, L Prudentius Contra Symmachum I, 577f Paulinus of Nola Ep. VIII. 3. 19f.

27. Jerome Ep. XXII & CXXIII

28. Contra Symmachum I, 577f (ré paganism), I, 379f (ré gladiators), II, 583f (ré Christ born into a united world), I, 587f (ré Rome as a basis of Christ's kingdom on earth)

29. Paulinus of Nola Ep. XXIX, 13, 20f.

30. Claudian (Cons.Stil.III 223f re Claudian see Alan Cameron: Claudian (1970) and his article on Claudian in Latin Literature in the Fourth Century (J. Binns (ed.) 1974) 134ff.

31. Claudian Cons.Hon. VI

32. Cons.Stil.II 386 ff

33. The Collectio Avellana in Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

34. Lactantius De Mortibus Persecutorum 26

35. Eusebius H.E. 8, 14, 3

36. Eusebius H.E. 8, 14, 1

37. Ambrose Epistles 40, 13 about mobs burning down Prefects' houses. A.M. XXVII, 3 about the burning of a Prefect's house (the orator/ Prefect Symmachus' father, Avianus Symmachus)

38. see Chapter 3, part II, section e and Eusebius H.E.8. 14

39. For attempts to find the real Maxentius beneath the Constantinian Propaganda, see:

T. D. Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius (1981), chapter 2

D. de Decker, La Politique Religieuse de Maxence (in Byzantion 1968) pp. 472-562)

Warmington on Panegyrici Latini IX (T.A.Ph.A. CIV 1974 pp. 371-384)

40. Anthony Birley and Alan Sorrell, Imperial Rome (1970) p.5

41. L. Homo, Rome Impérial et l'Urbanisme dans L'antiquité (1942) p.64 about the expansion of the city.

42. A. Birley, op.cit. p.5

43. Zosimus Historia Nova II, 43, 53 Aurelius Victor, Liber de Caesaribus, 42, 6. A.M. XXVIII, 1, 1

44. Lactantius De Mortibus Persecutorum 27

45. C.Th. XVI, 10,3 forbids demolition of Temples from which public entertainments commence - issued by Constans in 342*

46. The Fourth Century Regionaries - lists of what each of the Fourteen Regions of the city contained at the time they were written. For text see L. Urlichs Codex Urbis Romae Topographicus (1871) 1-27

47. J. Carcopino in Daily Life in Ancient Rome (1941) (referred to in the text and later notes as Carcopino - page numbers in these notes are from the Penguin edition) pp. 28-9, ridicules this figure

*Dates in text and notes are A.D. unless otherwise specified

arrived at by M. Edouard Cuq, M.A.I. XI (1915), pp. 279-335, and Ferdinand Lot, La Fin du Monde Antique (1931) p.80, 85, partly because it is based on the assumption that 'domus' means real estate and 'Insula' means not an architectural but a dwelling unit (i.e. that only 46,000 dwelling units/'cenacula' existed in fourth century Rome and these crammed into 1800 sites), and partly because the figure is lower than the number of adult male citizens who enjoyed the generosity of Augustus. I agree with Carcopino.

48. Carcopino's more optimistic figure (his less enormous figure is 1,200,000) is based, like the Cuq/Lot figures on the 46,000 plus 'insulae' and 1797 'domus' in the Regionaries, but taking 'domus' (a one storey house) and 'Insula' (apartment block with streets on all sides) at their face values. The assumption is made that each dwelling unit had at least five inhabitants, so that with five or so flats per Insula there will be at least 25 people in an apartment block, and that the inhabitants of all 'domus', free and slave alike, numbered about 50,000. Anthony King, Archaeology of the Roman Empire (1982) p.33 says that 1,250,000 to 1,500,000 is the current estimate for the population at the city's height.

49. A. Chastagnol La Préfecture Urbaine à Rome sous le bas Empire (1960) p.182. This is also based on the Regionaries' figures (logically enough, compared to Carcopino who has to guess the second century population from these fourth century figures - nonetheless Carcopino is probably correct in assuming that the population is unlikely to have grown since the Antonine period, so that he can use fourth century evidence to establish a minimum.)

50. Chastagnol supports this assumption with L. Homo, Rome Imperiale... pp. 640-9; it looks, however, as though Homo derived his figures from Cuq and Lot - see note 47 above.

51. P.U.R.B.E. p.314, D. van Berchem, Les Distributions de blé et d'argent à la plèbe Romaine sous l'Empire (1939) pp. 36-45

52. Carcopino p.27. Suetonius Julius Caesar, 41 and Augustus, 101

53. see G. Rickman, The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome (1981) chapter 7 - he distinguishes between the corn for the distributions and that for supporting the city as a whole - hence Egypt and Africa might supply enough to feed a million Romans, but much of it went to the free market.

54. P.U.R.B.E. p. 292

55. Carthage - Charles Picard, La Carthage de Saint Augustin (1965) reckons Carthage had a population a third the size of Rome, whatever size Rome's may have been - he prefers the million estimates for Rome to Chastagnol's

Antioch - Liebeschuetz, Antioch - City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire (1972) says Antioch ranked fourth in size among the cities of the Empire (according to Ausonius, Ord.Urb.Nobilium, II, 22 (388-9)) and that in Augustus' day it was a little smaller than Alexandria (Strabo, XVI, 2,5). Liebeschuetz's estimate for the city's population (based on the area of Antioch that could be built on - not all 1700-2100 hectares of the city were suitable for building) is 390,000, but he warns there may not have been many high rise tenements; so the population may have been nearer 200,000. The literary evidence, mainly Libanius and St. John Chrysostom (Hom. in Matt. 66.3) suggests a population of between 150,000 and 300,000, according to Liebeschuetz's calculations.

Constantinople - A.H.M. Jones, Later Roman Empire (1964) p.698, calculates that in the sixth century Egypt sent corn enough to Constantinople to feed 600,000. But that was long after our period, and it was in the fifth century that the rising population of Constantinople passed Rome's declining population. In the fourth century, the eastern capital took until about 384 to expand to fill up its Constantinian walls (Dagron, Naissance d'une

Capitale (1974)), so it was probably of a size then with Alexandria, Antioch and Carthage.

Alexandria - A.H.M. Jones, L.R.E. p.1040 suggests Alexandria in the sixth century had a population half that of Constantinople, based on its own corn supply. Jones' estimate for Rome in the early fourth century is 500,000 - 750,000, which seems a reasonable compromise between Chastagnol and estimates in excess of a million (L.R.E. p.1040).

56. Proinde Roman ingressus imperii virtutumque omnium larem, cum venisset ad rostra, perspectissimum priscae potentiae forum, obstipuit, perque omne latus quo se oculi contulissent, miraculorum densitate praestrictus,....

Deinde intra septem montium culmina, per acclivitates planitiemque posita urbis membra collustrans et suburbana, quicquid viderat primum, id eminere inter alia cuncta sperabat: Iovis Tarpei delubra, quantum terrenis divina praecellunt; lavacra in modum provinciarum exstructa; amphitheatri molem solidatam lapidis Tiburtini compage, ad cuius summitatem aegre visio humana conscendit; Pantheum velut regionem teretem speciosa celsitudine fornicatam; elatosque vertices que scansili suggestu consurgunt, priorum principum imitamenta portantes, et Urbis templum forumque pacis, et Pompei theatrum et Odeum et Stadium, aliaque inter haec decora urbis aeternae. Verum cum ad Traiani forum venisset, singularem sub omni caelo structuram, opinamur, etiam numinum assensione mirabilem, haerebat attonitus...

57. A.M. XVI. 10.15-17 ends with a complaint of Constantius that Fame, which exaggerates everything, becomes shabby when describing what there is at Rome.

58. It is suggested by Rougé, Sources Chrétiennes: Expositio Totius Mundi (Ed. Rougé) that this was written by a merchant in Jerusalem in 359-60: civitatem maximam et eminentissimam et regalem, quae de nomine

virtutem ostentat et vocatur Roma;...Est itaque quam maxima et aedificiis divinis ornata: quisque enim (ex) antefactis imperatorum, aut nunc qui sunt, in eam condere aliquid voluerunt, et singuli eorum opus qualecumque in nomine suo faciunt. Si enim volueris Antonium (memorare), opera invenies innumeratos; sicut et quae dicitur forum Traiani, quae habet basilicam praecipuam et nominatam. Habet autem et circenses bene positos et aeramento multo ornatos.

59. See Alfred Frazer, The Iconography of the Emperor Maxentius' Buildings (Art Bulletin (New York) 1966 vol. 48, pp. 385-92)

60. Symmachus Relationes 25 and 26

61. ibid.

62. vix fama nota est, abditis quam plena sanctis Roma sit, quam dives urbanum solum sacris sepulchris floreat.

63. Innumeros cineres sanctorum Romula in urbe vidimus, O Christi Valeriane sacer

64. et tot templa deum Romae quot in orbe sepulchra herooum numerare licet.

65. A. Birley, op.cit.

66. et saepe, cum equestres ederet ludos, dicacitate plebis oblectabatur, nec superbae nec a libertate coalita desciscentis, reverenter modum ipse quoque debitum servans. Non enim (ut per civitates alias) ad arbitrium suum certamina finiri patiebatur, sed (ut mos est) variis casibus permittebat.

67. Lactantius De Mortibus Persecutorum 27

68. quia in curia fueris, quis in rostris...ut te omnibus principem, singulis senatorem; ut crebro civilique progressu non publica tantum opera lustraveris, sed privatas quoque aedes divinis vestigiis consecraris, remota custodia militari tutior publici amoris excubilis.

69. cum nihil possit esse iocundius vel abundantia vel quiete ac summa felicitas sit, quotiens duo ista iunguntur, procul dubio sublimitas tua perspicit, quam gratae nobis litterae tuae fuerint, cum et eos

esse compressos, qui sanctissimam legem tumultu et seditione miscuerant, et annonam communis omnium patriae paulatim in statum pristinum redire coepisse testatae sunt.

70. The trouble-makers were Ursinians - see chapter 3. II.b for religion as a cause of riots.

71. Roman Imperial Coinage IX (1923-[illegible]) Mint Lugdunum, Coin 46; Mint Roma Coins 54a and 65b; Mint Mediolanum, Coin 19a. Claudian Gildo 39ff.

72. See F. Paschoud, Roma Aeterna (1967) passim

73. ...ecce mihi subito mors Pammachii atque Marcellae, romanae urbis obsidio, multorumque fratrum et sororum dormitio nuntiata est. Atque ita consternatus obstupui, ut nihil aliud diebus ac nobtibus nisi de salute omnium cogitarem meque in captivitate sanctorum putarem esse captivum, nec possem prius ora reserare nisi aliquid certius discerem dum inter spem et desperationem sollicitus pendeo aliorumque malis me crucio. Postquam vero clarissimum terrarum omnium lumen exstinctum est, immo romani imperii truncatum caput et, verius dicam, in una urbe totus orbis interiit...

74. Symmachus Rel.8

75. A.M. XXVII, 3, 8

76. A.M. XIV, 6, 2

Chapter 2

1. Strabo V.3.7
2. See Chapter 1
3. See Carcopino p.31 about the non-availability of parts of Rome's 8 square miles area
4. Carcopino p.35 - 'cenaculum' may be too grand a name for the poor man's room(s), more commonly given the names 'meritorium' or 'deversorium' than 'cenaculum' (cf. B. W. Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Ancient Rome (1980) p.xiii and p.27) - but I shall continue to use it for consistency.
5. In the fourth century Regionaries there are only 1,797 'Domus' to 46,602 'Insulae' (Domus here probably means the free-standing residences as opposed to ground floors of Insulae)
6. Carcopino p.44-6
7. Carcopino p.44
8. J. G. Landels, Engineering in the Ancient World (1978) pp. 42f.
9. J. G. Landels, Engineering in the Ancient World p.42 and Vitruvius
10. J. G. Landels, Engineering in the Ancient World pp. 42-3
11. Carcopino pp. 46-7
12. Juvenal, Satires III. 277
13. Carcopino pp. 49-52 - There were laws to cover injury to passers-by hit by slops thrown from above:- Ulpian Digest IX.3.5.1-2 and 7
14. Carcopino, p.52 - For topic of rent in Rome see B. W. Frier, Landlords and Tenants in Ancient Rome (1980)
15. Carcopino p.35
16. Carcopino pp. 185-6, Martial IV. 8. 3-4 (First century of course, but change is unlikely)
17. C.Th. XIV. 18 (A.D. 382)
18. "Cum manum porrexerint, bucinant; cum ad agapen vocaverint praeco conducitur. Vidi nuper-nomina taceo, ne saturam putes-nobilissimam

mulierum Romanarum in basilica beati Petri semiviris antecedentibus propria manu, quo religiosior putaretur, singulos nummos dispertire pauperibus. Interea-ut usu nosse perfacile est-anus quaedam annis pannisque obsita praecurrit, ut alterum nummum acciperet; ad quam cum ordine pervenisset, pugnus porrigitur pro denario et tanti criminis reus sanguis effunditur."

19. For a discussion: S. P. Saller, Personal Patronage under the Roman Empire (1982) and J.P.V.D. Balsdon, Romans and Aliens (1979)

20. "Ex his quidam cum salutari pectoribus oppositis coeperint, osculanda capita in modum taurorum minacium obliquantes, adulatoribus offerunt genua savianda, vel manus, id illis sufficere ad beate vivendum estimantes."

21. Juvenal III. 119f

22. Juvenal III. 147f

23. P.U.R.B.E. p.277 Part II Chapter 3

24. J.P.V.D. Balsdon, Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome (1969) p.22

25. ibid

26. Suetonius Augustus 42

27. Carcopino p.207 about calendar - his figure - Balsdon, Life and Leisure... p.248 gives a figure of 177 (also using the calendar of 354) - My own count (using the Calendar: C.I.L. 1 pp. 254f) is about 100

28. Carcopino p.207. See also Life and Leisure... pp. 247-8 about inflation in the number of Games generally

29. Life and Leisure...p.331 about the burden on Curiales/town councillor class making them unwilling to serve on councils

30. P.U.R.B.E. pp. 278-9

31. "Expectantur cotidie nuntii, qui propinquare urbi munera promissa confirment; aurigarum et equorum fama colligitur; omne vehiculum omne navigium scaenicos artifices advexisse iactatur."

Chapter 2 notes

32. "At vero populus imperialis munificentiae muneribus expletus in amorem vestrum prompta inclinatione concessit. qui ubi conperit meo praefatu, adfore dona publicorum parentum, portis omnibus in longinqua fusus erupit, feliciorem ceteris iudicans qui primus bona vestra vidisset."

33. "aut quod est studiorum omnium maxima ab ortu lucis ad vesperam sole fatiscunt vel pluviis, per minutias aurigarum equorumque praecipua vel delicta scrutantes. Et est admodum mirum videre plebem innumeram mentibus ardore quodam infuso, e dimicationum curulium eventu pendentem."

Chapter 3

1. Hoc administrante alimentaria res abundavit et querelae plebis excitari crebro solitae cessaverunt.
2. sub hoc tamen Aproniano, ita iugiter copia necessariorum exuberavit, ut nulla saltim levia murmura super inopia victui congruentium, orerentur, quod assidue Romae contingit.
3. In metu enim sumus, ne obsit commeatibus annonariis medii temporis mora et perturbatio plebis oriatur.
4. 308 Panegyric of 313 to Constantine (in Panegyrici Latini IV), Eusebius H.E.
5. 359 A.M. XIX. 10
6. 361 Mamertinus XIV, i/ii (a panegyric of Julian in Panegyrici Latini), 368/9 Collectio Avellana X.1
7. 376- Ambrose De Officiis i. III. ch. vii, 45-51; J. R. Palanque, 'Famines à Rome à la fin du IVe siècle' (Revue des Études Anciennes 1931)
8. 383 - Symmachus Rel. 3, Ep. II. 6.2, IV.74 and Palanque op.cit
9. 384 - Symmachus Rel. 18, Ep. II. 7.3 (Budé notes on) and Palanque op.cit.
10. 388 - Symm. Ep. III. 55 and III.82
11. 394-5 Seeck (in his M.G.H. edition of the works of Symmachus) thinks there was a famine at this time because Nichomachus Flavianus Iunior regained his popularity (having lost it through support for the usurper Eugenius, who was defeated by Theodosius in late 394) through people recalling that there were no famines in his Urban Prefecture in contrast to the one they were suffering: Symm. Ep. VI. 1.2.
12. 395-6 a letter of 397 of Symmachus (Ep.IV. 54.2) mentions famines of the previous years - if 395 and 396 are counted as different years instead of a single famine (the season lasting from the end

pages 176 and 177 are inverted

of the first year to the beginning of the second), then Seeck may be wrong to assign a famine to 394-5, but it seems he is probably right.

13. 397-8 - the famine caused by Gildo's revolt in Africa - Symmachus: Ep. IV. 5, and VII, 38 and Claudian Gildo

14. 399 - Symm. Ep. IX.14 dated by Seeck to 399 because it is addressed to the Proconsul of Africa that year.

15. Constantinopolis enim Thraciae ab ea quam plurime pascitur; similiter et orientales partes, maxime propter exercitum imperatoris et bellum Persarum: propterea non posse aliam provinciam sufficere nisi divinam Aegyptam.

16. Symm. Rel. 3

17. Corn Supply... chapter 1

18. Symm. Ep. III. 55, III, 82

19. magna igitur necessitate futuri anni inopiam protestatus es. Quid enim spei reliquum est,cum provinciis Africanis nec ad victum tenuem frugum tritura responderit et adportata ex aliis terris vicinus annus expectet? iure igitur ad aeternorum principum providentiam provincialum sollicitudo confugit.

20. Ambrose Epistles 18, 32

21. Panegyrici Latini XIV i/ii + v/vi of Mamertinus' panegyric of Julian

22. J. R. Palanque op.cit.

23. ibid. and Symm. Ep. II. 7.3

24. A.M. XIV. 6. 19

25. C.Th. XIV. 24

26. After the defeat of Magnentius in 353, it was found that there was less money in the Arca Vinaria (which dealt with the money from the cheap wine, and occasionally contributed towards maintaining public monuments and utilities) than there should have

Chapter 3 notes

been - this later led to trouble for Orfitus, Prefect of the City for much of the 350's, serving two terms, and his son-in-law, Symmachus. For more on the Arca Vinaria scandal cf. P.U.R.B.E. pp. 341-9

27. A.M. XXVII. 3

28. P.U.R.B.E. p.329

29. nam viginti dies urbis alimoniis parca interim promittit expensio. Praeterea amplissimi ordinis secunda conlatio accessurum securitate aliquid pollicetur. Nihilominus etiam carnis oblatio animos Romanae plebis erexit.

30. Historia Augusta Marcus 12-13

31. T. D. Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius (1981) p. 53

32. ibid. p. 38

33. A.M. XXIII, 3. 7. Prudentius (writing in the early fifth century) says: "posthinc ad populum converte oculos quota pars est quae Iovis infectam sanie non despuat aram?" Contra Symmachum I, 577

34. Jerome, Epistles 32, 7ff

35. Julian Letters 22, 430D

36. A. Chastagnol, Les Fastes de la Préfecture Urbaine à Rome sous le Bas Empire (1962) Chapter 3

37. T. D. Barnes, op.cit. p.38. D. de Decker, op.cit.

38. ibid.

39. ibid.

40. Juvenal Satires X. 81

41. C.Th. VI. 4.6

42. Alan Cameron, Circus Factions (1976) p.190

43. Inter quos hi qui ad satietatem vixerunt, potiores auctoritate longaeva, per canos et rugas clamitant saepe, rem publicam stare non posse, si futura concertatione, quem quisque vindicat, carceribus

non exsiluerit princeps, et inominalibus equis, parum cohaerenter circumflexerit metam.

44. Life and Leisure... p.268 based on Huelsen Il Posto degli Arvali nel Colosseo e la capacita dei teatri di Roma Antica (1894)

45. nam ubi primum Romae amarus de eo rumor increpuit, recusavit populus sollemnes theatri voluptates memoriamque eius inlustrem multa adclamatione testatus graviter egit cum livore, quod sibi inclytorum principum beneficia sustulisset.

46. Jerome Epistles 23, 3, 6f about Praetextatus and Lea

47. in bonam partem plebs nostra mutata est, ideo ut iugiter seditiosorum poena poscatur et iam terga dederint insolentes.

48. paucis a patria afuimus, et theatralibus ludis reditum nostrum suffragia civium poposcerunt.

49. de publicis scribenda non suppetunt absque eo, quod in Traiani platea ruina unius insulae pressit habitantes; quod adeo ad fortunum vehiculi publici plebeia vertit invidia, ut iam privato rectore utatur.

50. A. Birley, op.cit.

51. Zosimus II, 13, A.M. XXIII. 3.3

52. Anthony King op.cit. p.37 on the 'Insula' below the Capitoline preserved into this century.

53. iam pridem, ex quo suffragia nulli
vendimus, effudit curas; nam qui dabat olim
imperium, fasces, legiones, omnis, nunc se
continet atque duas tantum res anxius optat
panem et circenses

54. Lactantius De Mortibus Persecutorum 44

55. Claudian, VI. Cons.Hon. Pacatus' panegyric of Theodosius also supports the affection of the people for Theodosius in 389 cf. p.24

56. Francois Paschoud, Zosime II. 29 et la version paienne du conversion de Constantin (in Cinq Études sur Zosime (1975))

Chapter 3 notes

57. interim Romae corrupto vulgo, simul Magnentii odio Nepotianus, materna stirpe Flavio propinquus, caeso urbi praefecto armataque gladiatorum manu imperator fit. Cuius stolidum ingenium adeo plebi Romanae patribusque exitio fuit, uti passim domus fora viae templaque cruore atque cadaveribus opplerentur bustorum modo.

58. Z. Yavetz, Plebs and Princeps (1975) p. 51-54 + passim

59. Expositio Totius Mundi XXXVI

60. Socrates II, 13

61. Libanius Or. 19, 22 and 20, 14

62. Themistius Discourses VII. 92a-c

63. J. Matthews, Western Aristocracies...

64. J. R. Martindale, Popular Disturbances in the late Roman Empire (an Oxford B.Phil. thesis) p.102, Theodosian Code XIII, 5, 32

65. A.M. XIV. 7.5

66. A.M. XXII, 14, 1-3

67. Libanius Or. I 206-211

68. Libanius Or. XXIX, 2f

69. Socrates I.24; Sozomen II, 19; Athanasius, Hist.Arian. ad Mon. 4; Theodoret I. 20

70. Athanasius op.cit. 10, 48, & 81

71. Socrates II, 12-13

72. Socrates II, 38; Sozomen IV 21

73. Socrates IV 14-15; Sozomen VI 13

74. Socrates VII 13

75. A.M. XXII, 11

76. Libanius Or. 19,4; Zosimus IV, 37, 3

77. Rufinus H.E. II, 22; Socrates V, 16; Sozomen VIII. 15

78. Alan Cameron Circus Factions (1976) part II

79. nec non vero etiam circensium spectaculum saevissime (perniciosa et saevissima contentione) spectatur.

Chapter 3 notes

80. R. Browning, 'The Riot of 387 in Antioch' (Journal of Roman Studies 1952 p.13) Libanius Or. 26, 7, about their new political power.

81. ibid.

82. Alan Cameron, Circus Factions (1976) part 2

83. Alexandria - Libanius Or. 19.4

Constantinople - Socrates H.E. V.13; Sozomen VII, 14; Ambrose Ep. 40.13

84. Socrates IV.38

85. Zosimus V.13 - 22

86. A.M. XXVI.6

87. Suetonius Claudius 18

88. Herodian VII. 3.5-6

89. Dio 79. 20

90. Herodian VII.7.1 see also Z. Yavetz, Plebs and Princeps passim

91. Dio 73. 20.2

92. Dio 79. 9.1

93. Dio 73.13

94. Herodian VII. 10.6

95. Herodian VII. 7.1-3

96. A. Cameron, Bread and Circuses: the Roman Emperor and his People (1973)

97. Dio 74. 13.3

98. Herodian VIII. 6.7

99. Dio 76. 4.3

100. Dio 78. 4.3

101. Dio 79. 21

102. Herodian VII. 7.3

103. ré. accession of Pertinax: Herodian II. 2.10.

ré. Didius Julianus: Herodian II.6.13

ré. Ulpian riot: Dio 80.2

104. Herodian VII.12

Chapter 4

1. Suetonius, Claudius 18. 2, Tacitus, Annals 12. 43
2. P.U.R.B.E. part I especially pp. 179-83
3. Lactantius, De Mortibus Persecutorum 26.2
4. Liber Pontificalis (ed. Duchesne) p.185 and notes 103, 107 (on p.200) 'omnia scheneca deserta vel domos civitatis in urbe Albanense sanctae ecclesiae dono obtulit Augustus Constantinianae'
5. A.M. XV.7. 6f
6. C.A. II. 84-85
7. "Damasus et Ursinus supra humanum modum ad rapiendam episcopi sedem ardentes, scissis studiis asperrime conflictabantur, ad usque mortis vulnerumque discrimina adiumentis utriusque progressis, quae nec corrigere sufficiens Viventius nec mollire, coactus vi magna, secessit in suburbanum".
8. C.A. V - XII show Valentinian's concern to prevent the Ursinians causing trouble by entering Rome and its environs, but also his tolerance, because he allowed the Ursinians to go anywhere they liked outside Italy, just as long as they should not cause trouble in Rome.
9. C.A. IV.2
10. Ambrose, Epistles 40.13
11. Ambrose, De Officiis I. III. ch. 7, 45-51
12. C.A. I. 3
13. Symm. Ep. VI. LXVI
14. C.Th. I. 6.4
15. C.I.L. Vol. 1 pp. 254f; some estimates suggest 177 days - see chapter 2, note 27.

Chapter 5

1. Strabo V. 3. 7
2. A.M. XXVII. 9
3. A.M. XV. 7
4. The reference for the Tarracius Bassus inscription is C.I.L. VI.1766
5. A.M. XV. 7
6. P.U.R.B.E. II. chapter 3, p.255
7. Coll.Avell. II
8. "interdum et ferro subitus grassator agit rem: armato quotiens tutae custode tenentur et Pomptina palus et Gallinaria pinus, sic inde huc omnes tamquam ad vivaria currunt". III. 305-308.
9. L. Homo, Rome Imperiale...pp. 118f
10. P.U.R.B.E. II chapter 3, p.261
11. Juvenal III 288ff.
12. A.M. XV, 7
13. P.U.R.B.E. II chapter 3, pp. 255-6
14. ibid p.255
15. "presbyteros quoque numero septem detentos per officium nititur ab urbe propellere, sed plebs fidelis occurrens eosdem presbyteros eruit et ad basilicam Liberii sine mora perduxit." C.A.I. 6-7
16. P.U.R.B.E. p.255
17. ibid pp. 260-1 about the Regionaries
18. Pliny Letters X. 34
19. Alan Cameron, Circus Factions (1976) part 2
20. Chastagnol says this because in the fifth century Symmachus (the Orator's nephew, P.U. in 418) instructed the Collegiati about the trouble between Boniface and Eulalius, Coll.Avell. XIV. 3
21. J. P. Waltzing, Étude Historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les Romaines depuis les origines jusqu'à la chute de l'Empire de Occident (1895)

Chapter 5 notes

22. "nec putet aeternitas vestra ab incepto temere destitisse deo proximum virum; noverat horum corporum ministerio tantae urbis onera sustineri. hic lanati pecoris invector est, ille ad victum populi cogit armentum, hos suillae carnis tenet functio, pars urenda lavacris ligna conportat, sunt qui fabriles manus augustis operibus adcommodent, per alios fortuita arcentur incendia."

23. P.U.R.B.E. II chapter 3

24. P.U.R.B.E. pp. 256-8, also Chastagnol in Historia IV (1955) p 173 ff

25. P.U.R.B.E. II chapter 3 p. 256 about curatores originating under Hadrian

26. ibid. p.257 about their change in status, H.A. Severus Alexander

27. Chastagnol in Historia 1955 p 173 ff

28. See chapter 3 p 45

29. See chapter 3, II section a about 384

30. Josephus, Bell.Iud. 2, 383-5

31. Corn Supply...

32. E.g. The Tiberine Boatmen who carried the corn up to Rome from Portus have only one concerning them in the fourth century C.Th. XIV 21

33. Being tied to a guild - the Naviculariі (C.Th. XIII. 5.1, XIII. 5.11, XIII. 6.2, III.31.1, XIII.5.19), The Bakers (C.Th. XIV. 3.2, XIV.3.3, XIV.3.5, XIV.3.10). On Penalties - XIII.5.29 (in the fifth century a Navicularius stopping on the way to Rome could suffer death or exile - XIII.5.33, and Curiales who did not force Naviculariі on their ways, if they stopped, might lose their property - XIII.5.34.) On Checks - XIV.15.2. On Overloading - XIII.8. On Shipwreck - XIII.9.5, XIII.9.3

34. C.Th. XIII.5.5 (A.D. 326) for both

35. C.Th. XIII.5.16

36. C.Th. XII. 5. 12

37. C.Th. XIII. 5.24

Chapter 5 notes

38. Corn Supply... p.203 C.Th. XIII.5.3

39. C.Th. XIII. 5.28

40. C.Th. XIII. 5.27

41. C.Th. XIV. 15.3 (15th April 397) and XIV. 15.5 (399) about cutting the tribute to Rome; C.Th. XIV. 15.6 (400) - Governors and Vicars must pay double if they appropriate the corn tribute

42. The Proconsul was Hymetius - A.M. XXVII. 1.17

43. C.Th. XIV.12

44. C.Th. XIV. 22.1

45. On the Tiberine boatmen XIV.21

46. E. T. Salmon - A History of the Roman World 14 - 138 A.D. (6th Edition) (1968) p.280 Pliny, Panegyric 26-8

47. Corn Supply... p.173

48. P.U.R.B.E. II Chapter IV, p.314, Van Berchem, Les Distributions... , Corn Supply... p.173 about diet, p.183 anti Van Berchem. For population size see Chapter 1 p 17-19

49. C.Th. XI. 14.1, XI. 14.2

50. About the Navicularii and their lands (C.Th. XIII. 5.1, XIII.5.11, XIII.6.2, III. 31.1, XIII.5.3, XIII.5.19). About Pistores and their lands (C.Th. XIV. 3.2, XIV.3.3, XIV.3.4, XIV.3.5, XIV.3.6, XIV.3.10, XIII.5.2 - about Navicularii to be made bakers - XIV.3.19). About condemnation to bakeries (C.Th. IX.40. 5 (A.D. 364)), IX.40.6 (A.D. 364), IX.40.7 (A.D. 364)

51. C.Th. XIII.5.11, XIV.3.10

52. C.Th. XIV. 3.3

53. C.Th. XIV. 3.4

54. C.Th. XIV 3.19

55. C.Th. XIV. 3.15

56. C.Th. XIV. 15.1, XIV. 3.16

Chapter 5 notes

57. C.Th. XIV. 17.3, XIV. 17.4

58. C.Th. XIV. 17.2 and note on it in C. Pharr, The Theodosian Code (1952) suggesting interpretation

59. C.Th. XIV 3.6

60. C.Th. XIV. 3.2, XIV. 3.3

61. About Minors C.Th. XIV. 3. 5

62. C.Th. XIV. 17.6

63. See note 50 - C.Th. IX. 40. 7 about no pardons

64. P.U.R.B.E. II. chapter 4 p.315

65. P.U.R.B.E. II. chapter 4 p.312 about Aurelian and (p.313) about the situation at the end of the fourth century - A.H.M. Jones, on p.701 of L.R.E. thinks 'Panis Fiscalis' of the Late Fourth Century is not 'Panis Popularis'. Valentinian I's change : C.Th. XIV. 17.3

66. P.U.R.B.E. II. chapter 4 p.321

67. ibid

68. C.Th. XIV. 24 - A.H.M. Jones, L.R.E. suggests their money came from a monopoly on selling none-dole Oil p.701

69. P.U.R.B.E. I chapter II p.52

70. C.Th. XI. 14.1

71. P.U.R.B.E. p.329

72. C.Th. XIV. 4. 2

73. C.Th. XIV. 4.3

74. C.Th. XIV. 4. 6, XIV. 4. 7

75. P.U.R.B.E. p.323

76. P.U.R.B.E. pp. 341 ff

77. C.Th. XI.2.2 puts the cheap wine to 75% of the market price

78. P.U.R.B.E. p.325 about the Free Market being largely in the hands of Tabernarii

79. Carcopino p.47

80. C.Th. XIV. 15.4

Chapter 5 notes

81. C.Th. XV. 2.5

82. P.U.R.B.E. p.341

83. C.Th. XV. 2.1

84. Lactantius, De Mortibus Persecutorum 26

85. C.Th. VII. 18.9

86. Valentinian II had asked Symmachus to extract from the records whatever Praetextatus had done at Rome in the Senate and assemblies of the people and send information to him

87. P.U.R.B.E. II chapter 3 p.278 about the upper limit on spending for Senators at Constantinople, but not at Rome

88. Who's Who in the Roman World (1980) (Editor Diana Bowder) p.204

89. Symm. Ep. IV. 58-63, VII 105-6, IX 18-25

90. Symm. Ep. VI. 63

91. Symm. Ep. V. 62

92. Symm. Ep. II. 46, IX, 117

93. P.U.R.B.E. pp. 137 and 280 (Praetors), 280 (Quaestors) - Chastagnol does not say they were means to get Games held. There were minimum ages - C.Th. VI. 4. 2

94. For ages of Quaestors and Praetors cf. C.Th. VI. 4. 1 (327), VI. 4. 2 (327)

95. P.U.R.B.E. p.280

96. Symm. Ep. V. 65

97. "nam cum foeda iactatio senatorias functiones gravibus inpendiis obruisset, et moribus et sumptibus nostris sanitatem veterem reddidistis, ne aut inpares facultate collegas tenuis decoloret editio aut per verecundiam viribus maiora conatus effusio inconsulta demergeret. 2...vetus dicendarum sententiarum forma reparata est, ne summum cuique decernendi locum non ratio munerum sed honorum fortuna praestaret.. in editionibus parsimonia, in senatu ordo retinebitur."

Chapter 5 notes

98. Cf. Calendar of 354 about 'Munera' and 'Ludi' being distinguished from each other

99. "nullo enim dissentiente decretum est, quis modus censuum semel aut saepius fungendis *muneribus obnoxius sit, quae instruendis* mediocritas editionibus adplicetur, quae gladiatorio muneri et quae scaenicis ludis sumptuum temperamenta conveniant, quid libertatis habere merentur praesentis expensio, quid damni absentium contumacia debeat experiri". *-* Seeck

100. C.Th. VI. 4. 6

101. Constantinian Law C.Th. VI. 4. 2; Valentinian's law VI. 4. 18

102. C.Th. VI. 4. 7 A modius = 2 gallon = 1/4 bushel

103. about Minors: C.Th. VI. 4. 2., about Quaestors: VI. 4. 1
397 law: VI. 4. 31. There was also a law that if the holder of the Games died before holding office, a sister should pay for the Games and that women should pay for Games if they were the sole children of rich senators: VI. 4. 17

104. C.Th. XV. 7. 6 about abduction of horses, XV. 10.1 on the sale of Spanish horses

105. P.U.R.B.E. p.281

106. C.Th. XV. 10.2. The Campanians got horses for their Games in return - A.H.M. Jones, L.R.E. p.706

107. C.Th. XV. 7. 4

108. C.Th. XV. 7. 5

109. A.M. XIV. 6. 19

110. C.Th. XV. 77

111. about Temples, C.Th. XVI. 10.3., about Sundays XV. 5. 2

112. C.Th. XIII. 5.13, Symm. Rel. 40, R. Barrow's notes on Rel. 40 in Prefect and Emperor (1973). A.H.M. Jones, L.R.E. (chapter 18 on Rome and Constantinople) about Mancipes Salinarum being in charge of Baths - he does not mention the Mancipes Thermarum

Chapter 5 notes

113. C.Th. XIII. 4. 3

114. A.M. XXVIII. 4. 34

115. F. R. Cowell, Everyday Life in Ancient Rome (1961) p.114

116. A.M. XXVII. 3

117. C.Th. XV. 1. 19

118. Symm. Rel. 25, 26; Ep. V. 76

119. A.M. XXVII. 3

120. "Sola post haec restabat erectio, quae vix aut ne vix quidem sperabatur posse compleri. At ea ita est facta: aggestis erectisque digestisque ad perpendiculum altis trabibus (ut machinarum cerneres nemus) innectuntur vasti funes et longi, ad speciem multiplicium liciorum, caelum densitate nimia subtexentes. Quibus colligatus mons ipse effigiatus scriptilibus elementis, paulatimque in arduum per inane protenus, diu pensilis, hominum milibus multis tamquam molendinarias rotantibus metas cavea locatur in media..."

121. Life and Leisure... pp. 24-54 about shops opening and closing, some working a full day, and starting work at dawn

122. A.M. XXVII. 9. 10

123. See Chapter 3. II. section e

124. P.U.R.B.E. p.181

125. L. Homo, Rome Imperiale... p.31

126. Juvenal III. 206

127. C.Th. XIII. 3.3

128. C.Th. XIII. 3.8

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