

ANCIENT ROMAN ECONOMY

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Annotation: The scientific article provides information about the emergence of the ancient Roman economy, its main sources, and the gradual development of the economy.

Key words: agriculture, trade, slave labor, export, import

The Roman economy was pre-industrial, and the majority of the population was engaged in agricultural production. Agriculture and household production were key features of the economy, along with urbanization, taxation, market exchange, and slavery. Roman economic history is usually divided into three main chronological periods: the Republic (509 BC - 31 BC), the Empire (31 BC - 284 AD) and the Late Empire (3rd-6th centuries AD end) periods. The period of the republic is characterized by a significant expansion of the territory and the acquisition of large wealth in the form of booty. A review of the economic changes in Roman Italy and its provinces and the principle of the study of the empire as an economic system. The late imperial period was characterized by increased state intervention in the economy.

The economy of the Roman Empire was characterized by agriculture and trade as the main sphere of activity. The population paid taxes to the state in exchange for owning and using land. State interference in economic activity was not common, so free competition was allowed. State intervention can only take place when public needs require it. The public accounts of ancient Rome were mainly financed by direct taxes, with taxes ranging from 5% to 10% of income. True, there were also indirect taxes on inheritance, slaves, gladiatorial games, and the importation of luxuries. Likewise, gold, silver, and copper mines were important sources of revenue for Rome.

In the chapter on public expenditure, we see that Rome needed a large army to maintain its vast territory. Therefore, a significant part of the expenses was aimed at maintaining the army. Also, the bureaucratic apparatus of the state took over most of the costs, not forgetting the money spent on the repair of roads, post offices and the palace. Certain tax breaks were given or donations were made when the plebs or soldiers needed financial support.

Mining activity was of great importance to Ancient Rome as a source of resources. Thus iron was obtained from Gaul, the British mines offered copper, and the mines of Pangeo (Greece) offered gold. Marble was obtained from the quarries of the island of Paros and Pentelic, and their trade extended from Greece to the Iberian Peninsula. On

the other hand, while gold, silver, copper, and iron were obtained from Asia Minor, Egyptian mines provided the porphyry and marble necessary for making statues. Previously, the most profitable mines remained in the hands of the state, while the less productive ones were leased. Therefore, those who exploited them had to pay a canon to Rome. Those who exploited the mines were free to choose between free labor and slave labor.

In the ancient Roman economy, agriculture was valued as a prestigious activity because this civilization arose from a farming and pastoral society. The patricians, like the social elite, owned luxurious villas and enjoyed large plots of land or large estates. Meanwhile, slaves worked in the fields where various foods were produced. These perishable products were brought to the markets every day. There were also small farmers who owned small estates or leased land to patricians. In return, the small free peasants gave part of the harvest to the patricians.

Craft products are very diverse, and almost all local construction work is entrusted to urban craftsmen. In addition, craftsmen used local raw materials in their work. Thus, professions such as carpentry, blacksmithing, weaving in looms played an important role in the economy of the Roman Empire. Since it was a craft production, mass production was rarely used. Only in some cases, such as textiles, ceramics or glass, it could be produced on a large scale. The cities of Asia Minor were at the forefront of the textile and dyeing arts, adding silk from China to their wide range of textiles, not to mention Middle Eastern regions such as Beirut, Tyre, Byblos, Tiberias and Palestine. The Egyptian cities of Alexandria and Thebes were distinguished in the production of medicines and perfumes. It was from Egypt that Rome was supplied with papyrus.

During the Roman Empire, the highest level of commercial transport occurred within the empire itself. Roads were built, maps and guides were provided to facilitate the movement of goods. On the other hand, sea transport made it possible to transport important goods. Thus, the largest ships of that time could not carry more than 150 tons of cargo. The port of Ostia was very important for the economy of the Roman Empire, and in the East the port of Alexandria was the most important. Considering the commercial importance of the ports, the state has done important work on their improvement. In this sense, ports are equipped with lighthouses and warehouses. It was the operation of the ports that meant the need for complementary jobs and services such as boatmen, carpenters and ropers. These specialists came to form associations called *collegia* in order to protect their interests. Certain months, bad weather conditions forced the trade to stop. It was what was called a "closed sea". To ensure the safety of maritime trade, only coastal trade was allowed, where a ship sailed close to the coast. The trade balance was in deficit for the Roman Empire as it imported luxuries such as ivory, spices, ointments, exotic animals, silk and precious stones. All

this required payment in gold and silver. These types of imports were harmful to the economy of the Roman Empire.

To sum up, the initially agricultural economy in Rome developed gradually. Slave labor began to be used in the economy. Other neighboring areas were occupied. Trade has developed.

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