

CAPUT III – VITRUVIUS AND COLUMELLA

...regiones aspiciantur et ita villae conlocentur. Magnitudines earum ad modum agri copiasque fructuum conparentur
...and the farmhouse placed. The size of a farmhouse is arranged to suit the amount of land and of the crops
Vitruvius. Liber VI. Caput VI. Villae

Roman agriculture is a *necessity* of life, it is also an *idealized* way of life. Italians embrace both aspects of agriculture with enthusiasm. Farming manuals are written by landowners, commencing with **Marcus Porcius Cato**, circa 160 BCE, through to **Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus Palladius**, circa the mid-5th Century CE

Cato is one of Rome's earliest writers on agriculture. In addition to history, he writes a manual on how to run a farm **de Agri Cultura**, **On Agriculture**. The origin of the work is interesting. As a young man he participates in Rome's Third Punic War against Carthage. The only book looted from Carthage is the 28 volume **de Re Rustica**, **On Matters Country**. Cato adapts the work to suit Italian soil and climate conditions. **de Agri Cultura** becomes the Roman textbook on agriculture

Palladius too owns agricultural estates. His **opus Agriculturae** is a 14 book treatise on applied methods concerned with running a farm. Books 2 to 13 gave detail monthly instructions on farm management for a yearly cycle. Book 14, **de Veterinaria Medicina** is devoted to veterinary science. **opus Agriculturae** has an influence beyond the Roman Empire. Europe of the Middle and Renaissance eras read the work. In England, the work is translated and consulted

Marcus Terentius Varro, a landowner and farmer; in 59 BCE, serves on the land and agricultural commission established by **Gaius Iulius Caesar**. The commission oversees agrarian reform and settlement for the **Capua** and **Campania** districts. Varro also advises **Augustus**. Varro wrote a work titled **de Re Rustica**, **On Country Matters**; often simply cited as **res Rusticae**

Cicero defends **Sextus Roscius** against the charge of patricide. Cicero turned the trial to his advantage and accuses **Lucius Cornelius Chysogonus** of murder and fraud. During the trial; **Chysogonus** mocks **Sextus** for his country-ways. Cicero replies: **vita autem haec rustica quam tu agrestem vocas parsimoniae, diligentiae, iustitiae magistra est, But a country life, which you call a clownish one, is the teacher of economy, of industry, and of justice**

Vitruvius, quoted at the top of this page; the passage continues below in the left column. Vitruvius is a *modern* architect. The passage is best-practice for the design and construction of farm buildings

Lucius Iunius Moderatus Columella is quoted in the right column. He writes his own 12 volume work, **de Re Rustica**. His other work is: **de Arboribus**, **On Trees**. The excerpt is bucolic romanticism, the rural idle at its best

VITRUVIUS

Chortes magnitudinesque earum ad pecorum numerum, atque quot iuga boum opus fuerint ibi versari, ita finiantur. In chorte culina quam calidissimo loco designetur. Coniuncta autem habeat bubilia, quorum praesepia ad focum et orientis caeli regionem spectent, ideo quod boves lumen et ignem spectando horridi non fiunt; item agricolae regionum inperiti non putant oportere aliam regionem caeli boves spectare nisi ortum solis. Bubiliis autem debent esse latitudines nec minores pedum denum nec maiores v denum; longitudo, uti singular iuga ne minus pedes occupant septenos. Balnearia item coniuncta sint culinae; ita enim lavationi rusticae ministratio non erit longe. Torcular item proximum sit culinae; ita enim ad olearios fructus commoda erit ministratio. Habeatque coniunctam vinariam cellam habentem ab septentrione lumina fenestrarum; cum enim alia parte habuerit, quae sol calfacere possit, vinum, quod erit in ea cella, confusum ab calore efficitur inbecillum

COLUMELLA

Quod si voto fortuna subscribit, agrum habebimus salubri caelo, uberi glaeba, parte campesti, parte alia collibus vel ad orientem vel ad meridiem molliter devexis; terrenisque aliis atque aliis silvestribus et asperis, nec procul a mari vel navigabili flumine, quo deportari fructus et per quod merces invehi possint...Colles alii vacui arboribus, ut solis segetibus serviant; quae tamen modice siccis ac pinguibus campis melius quam praecipitibus locis proveniunt...Alii deinde colles olivetis vineisque et earum futuris pedamentis vestiantur, materiam lapidemque, si necessitas aedificandi coegerit, nec minus pecudibus pascua praebere possint, tum rivos decurrentes in prata et hortos et salicta villaeque aquas salientes demittant. Nec absint greges armentorum ceterorumque quadripedum culta et dumeta pascentium. Sed haec positio, quam desideramus, difficilis et rara paucis contingit; proxima est huic, quae plurima ex his habet; tolerabilis, quae non paucissima

Recent archaeological evidence of rural sites and DNA analysis of human remains indicates improved agricultural practice resulted in greater availability of food with a direct effect on health, from the late Republic to the end of the Principate