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# The land of Caesar: Geography and economy of the imperial properties in Roman Asia Minor

## Rapports

### Informations projet

#### LANCRAM

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**Final Report Summary - LANCRAM (The land of Caesar: Geography and economy of the imperial properties in Roman Asia Minor)**

The project LanCRAM (The Land of Caesar: geography and economy of the imperial properties in Roman Asia Minor) aimed at studying the geographical distribution and the economic, social and political impact of the properties of the Roman emperors in Asia Minor. These consisted of landed estates, pastureland, woods, mines and quarries. This immense richness was a key element for the maintenance of the position of supreme power, since the emperor could use it to confer social status to individuals or benefits to provincial communities. Furthermore, imperial properties produced undeniable economic repercussions on the regions where they had a considerable extension. Since their owner was both the head of the empire and a global economic player, we can trace a tendency to trans-regional uniformity in the patterns of exploitation and a positive effect on the integration of rural areas in the political and economic system of the empire. No major survey of the available Asia Minor documentation has been produced since the beginning of the 1930s and many questions about the development and use of the properties remain unanswered.

The project has the aim of filling this gap, firstly by updating the documentary base. The volume of new epigraphic discoveries in Asia Minor has been remarkable in the last decades and therefore these new documents needed to be taken into account and inserted in the digital database of the imperial properties (DIP). This work has been carried out for the entire two-year period, but this has not been the only activity related to our sources. The multidisciplinary nature of the approach, combining the geographic reconstruction with an administrative, economic and social study, needed to significantly broaden the documentary base, taking systematically into consideration all the attestation of the people connected with the imperial patrimony, such as the tenants, the administrators (procurators) and the imperial freedmen. Plus, the database has been conceived not only as a repository of literary and epigraphic documents, but as a research tool for placing the documents in their geographical and social context. Documents have therefore been georeferenced and placed in their respective geographic and/or administrative regions; independent tables have been created for each region and filled with known data about the preexisting conditions of the private and public property; this has allowed to better assess and determine why and how imperial property developed in each region, and particularly why we see such strong differences in the patterns of distribution of imperial estates. The different tables (documents, people, places, regions, bibliography) have been linked in a relational database in order to allow for more powerful searching capabilities.

The documentation has been approached from multiple perspectives, in order to give a better assessment of the multifaceted impact of the presence of the imperial properties on the social and economic life of a given region and for the whole of Asia Minor. This analysis has been conducted chiefly within the three workshops organized in Paris during the two-year project. The first (held in June 2015) has been dedicated to the different social groups connected with the exploitation and the administration of the properties; the second (held in May 2017) considered the various way in which the emperor and the inclusion of Asia Minor in the Roman Empire shaped and influenced the economy of this region; the last workshop (held in July 2017) considered key issues connected with the imperial properties starting from an in-depth analysis of important archeological and epigraphic sources from regions outside Asia Minor. The proceedings of the workshops will all be published in 2017: the first two in a standalone volume, the third as a series of articles in the journal *Cahiers du centre Gustave-Glotz*. Other lines of research consisted in a better reconstruction of the beginnings of the administrative organization of the imperial patrimony in Asia Minor and in a reappraisal of the historiographical debate around the question of the

continuity/discontinuity between hellenistic royal land and roman imperial properties; individual papers presented in Oxford and Münster allowed to disseminate the research results. Work on a monograph on the history of the imperial properties in Asia Minor is under way. The planned volume will draw on the documentary base and on the preliminary results of the LanCRAM project to present in a systematic way the geographic development and the economic impact of the imperial properties in this important region.

LanCRAM has led to a better reconstruction of the geographical distribution of the imperial properties in the region and, more importantly, to a much finer appraisal of the patterns of development of the properties in each region and of the reasons underlying the differences in the geographic distribution. These cannot be reduced to a single scheme and therefore the presence or the absence of imperial properties can be explained case by case with economic, political or personal choices. Extremely significant has been the study of the modalities of acquisition of the properties. This has allowed to highlight the fundamental, but up to now underestimated, contribution of imperial freedmen to the growth of the imperial patrimony, since a part of their personal fortune always went to the emperor after their death. The study of imperial freedmen has also illustrated their role as leading economic actors at local level and allowed also to introduce a social perspective in the study of the imperial properties. Another important result concerns the clearer reconstruction of the transition from the private management of the estates to an imperial patrimonial administration under Augustus. More generally, LanCRAM has given us a better insight in how the emperors used their patrimony as a political instrument and, ultimately, as a source of power.

The promising perspective of this research deserved to be extended to other regions of the empire. Drawing on the methodology and the results of LanCRAM, a new empire-wide project, PATRIMONIVM, has been submitted to the European Research Council and has been awarded with an ERC Starting Grant in 2016. PATRIMONIVM will start in 2017 and will further develop the successful multidisciplinary approach of LanCRAM.

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