THE ROMAN EMPIRE

From *a* Political Science point of view

TODAY

- Begin with some theoretical observations

- largely from Münkler

- The my - as a political scientist - reading of the Roman empire.

WHAT IS EMPIRE?

- What is is *not*?
  - Hegemony
  - Imperialism
  - State
- What *is* it?
  - A system of interaction between two political entities, one of which, the dominant metropole, exerts political control over the internal and external policy - the effective sovereignty - of the other, the subordinate periphery,

ONLY TWO?

- Münkler: state and empire only two forms

- State: even sovereignty/control, identity

- Empire: uneven and declining control

- But: feudalism, church universalims?

RISE

- New empires often develop from the periphery of centre of political/economic action

- lower cost: no/less competition

- "time sovereignty", decide tempo of own development, again competition

    - see Rome, mongols, US, UK

MAINTANANECE

- Augustan threshold

    - from expansion to consilidation

- Key to duration is to give the (elites of) the periphey a stake, an interest, or to invest in periphery

    - the alternative is to exploit periphery to make pay-offs to diverse interest in metropole

- Not necessarily (only) economic interest, also "civilizational"

- Why did, ia, the Mongolian empire fail to pass the Augustan threshold?

FALL

- Michael Mann: IEMP model

- ideology, economy, military, political sources of social power

- an empire that doesn't build on all, provokes its own downfall

- the enemy of empire will attack your weakest point

    - in Rome ideology, but military; today?

ALWAYS BAD?

- We tend to think about imperialism as inherently bad, but is empire always and necessarily bad?

- Peace

- Economic development, exchange of ideas

- Integration - or rather ethnicity and cultural diversity as non-issues

- Some examples of this...

RISE: TO THE AUGUSTAN TRESHOLD

- Rome a military-agricultural complex

- Only land-owners served in the army

- Decline of economy 5th CBC - concentration of land in fewer hands

- = conquer new land to mitigate discontent, and maintain base for army

- + conquest only way to handle population growth

CONT'D

- After 2d Punic war (218-201 BC) intensified concentration of land + slave labor

- Proletariat growing, base for army shrinking

- Growing empire necessitated large standing armies

- 107 BC Marius decides to allow property-less poor in the army

CONT'D

- These property-less soldiers felt greater loyalty to their generals; whereas the farmer-soldiers had felt greater loyalty to the state

- because their generals would provide them with loot and land, upon discharge

- the generals had to conquer in order to provide their soldiers with all this.....

- the state's *army* became generals' private *armies*....and "Rome" was forced to expand

CONT'D

- With these private armies, great generals could furhter thehir own ends, and the last C BC was in many ways a series of civil wars

- in which Roman generals led their armies on Rome

- Marius - Sulla, Pompey - Caesar, Augustus - Antony

AUGUSTAN TRESHOLD

- Augustus finally put an end to this competition, monopolises the army

- and thereby destroyed the republic....

- but can begin to consolidate the empire

MAINTENANCE: THE EMPIRE PROPER

- Huge infrastructural programs (economy)

- Interdependent division of labor (economy)

- Extended citizenship (political)

- Co-optation ocal elite (political)

- Romanization of local elites, also outside of empire (ideology)

- Pax Romana (military)

- Continous movement of troops and commanders (military)

DISINTEGRATION

- Towards 5th C AD things start changing

- Economic decline, rely more on local troops than state troops - mercenaries from outside

- Growth of frontier society, neither Roman nor outside....mixture

- nucleasation: landlords warlords landlords...

CONT'D

- strong local rulers challenge empire

- NOT ideology

- NOT economy

- but military and politica

- Germanic invaders - are they barbarian invaders OR

- displeased local authorities...

- BOTH, most of the time....