

The Inheritance of Land among Bavarian and Tyrolese Peasants

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RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur examine les coutumes qui ont trait à l'héritage de deux communautés des Alpes italiennes.

The interest of the writer in patterns of peasant inheritance was kindled during a study of two communities in the region of Trentino-Alto Adige in the Italian Alps (Wolf 1962).¹ One of these communities was German-speaking, the other Romance-speaking. Among German speakers in the South Tyrol impartible inheritance is both ideal and widespread practice; the Romance-speakers adhere to a pattern of partible inheritance (Schreiber 1948). Other social facts seem "to go" with these contrasts in inheritance patterns. With inheritance impartible through oldest sons, patrilineal descent lines become patrilineal descent groups, holding impartible estates. Oldest sons inherit; younger siblings must leave (*weichende Erben*) or remain on the ancestral farmstead in a subordinate and dependent position. Decision-making remains in the hands of the principal heir. In-marrying women, usually themselves from impartible homesteads, remain outsiders on the homesteads of their husbands as far as rights over land are concerned. Among the Romance-speakers with partible inheritance, the opposite seems to be true. Sons as well as daughters inherit shares of land and money; shares of land can be bought

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and sold; marriages are concerted on the basis of pooled shares of land and money. Women retain property rights in land, and decision-making remains more diffuse than among the population with impartibility. In creating and maintaining this contrast inheritance patterns seem to play a signal role. I was therefore tempted to use the occasion of the Conference on Central and North-Central European Peasant Cultures, held under the auspices of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, to examine some of the considerations involved. The findings are reported here.

In principle, partible inheritance insures an equitable distribution of shares among heirs; impartible inheritance insists on the transfer of the homestead to a single heir. Things are, however, more complex. Partibility may apply only to sons, or to both sons and daughters. It may be employed to share out land among sons, only money and goods among daughters. Impartibility demands a single heir: but that heir may be fixed by rules of primogeniture or ultimogeniture; or his choice may be optional. Again, the rule must stipulate if the single heir can be female or must always be male.

There exist, moreover, at least two situations transitional between partibility and impartibility (see Roehm 1957). The first of these modifies a basic pattern of partibility in the direction of impartibility, by granting the homestead integrally to one heir, but compensating the other heirs with pieces of land. The second of these operates as a variant from an original pattern of impartibility. Impartible inheritance is maintained rigorously on the larger homesteads, but partibility is allowed and practiced readily on smaller pieces of real estate. Thus, in the Tyrol, impartibility has always co-existed with the free disposition of freely circulating (so-called *walzende*, — meaning tumbling, i.e. migrating) pieces of land which could freely be bought and sold.

The area under consideration in this paper shows, at the present time, such a dominant pattern of impartibility on large farms, with smaller pieces of land subject to repeated purchase and repurchase. Partibility as a dominant pattern within German-speaking areas occurs only in the Western Tyrol, both north and south of the Brenner (districts Imst and Reuss in the north, Val

Venosta or Vintschgau in the south); around Berchtesgaden in Bavaria; and again in the vineyard areas between Bozen (Bolzano) and Salurn (Salorno) on the Etsch (Adige) River. In these we encounter also the transitional form which grants a larger portion to a single heir, smaller portions to the remainder.

At this point let us interject a sociological note. Inheritance rules govern transfers of rights from one generation to the next; they are therefore intimately connected with other transfers of rights, such as dowry payments or the use of land as surety in contracting debts. Dowry implies a movement of rights in property from the domestic group of the bride to the domestic group of the husband. Debt implies a movement of rights from the peasant homestead to another party, most often a money-lender or a bank. Both dowry and indebtedness influence how inheritance rules are practiced. In areas with partible inheritance, the bride brings land as well as money and goods. Father's property (*Vatergut*) and mother's property (*Muttergut*) tend to remain conceptually separate. Mother's property guarantees to her a measure of subsistence and support if her marriage partner dies and his portion is divided among the heirs; her property is then divided separately after her demise. Where partibility leans towards single-heir inheritance, we often find one heir taking over the father's property intact, while the remaining siblings are compensated with shares of mother's property, a custom which recalls the stipulations of the *Lex Baiuvariorum* of a thousand years ago (see below). In areas with impartible male inheritance, women cannot inherit land. A woman's dowry buys her no more than subsistence rights on her husband's farm after inheritance has passed from her husband to the chosen son. The amount of dowry is, of course, crucial as well in paying off any debts which encumber the husband's homestead. "Cash talks", the Bavarians say, and the search for brides from wealthy homesteads, equipped with sizeable cash dowries, creates a highly competitive marriage market.

Two other observations are in order, this time on the custom of partibility. Unlimited partibility, practiced over a number of generations, of course results in the development of minimifundia, or what German writers call "dwarf holdings," too small to be of economic use. There may, nevertheless, exist social factors which

inhibit unlimited partition. As long as the heirs do not take up their separate shares, a domestic group comprising several heirs and their descendants can continue to live and farm on the same homestead. Such domestic groups farming individual shares jointly are, of course, attested to in many parts of Europe. The Tyrolese laws of 1404 and 1532 explicitly recognize such *Mithause-reien*; in the Eastern Tyrol they existed down to the first half of the 19th century (Wopfner 1954:137). It is involvement in the outside market — through increasing indebtedness and money transactions — which broke up these larger domestic groups, numbering up to 40 persons, not the existence of partibility as such. In other areas, e.g. in the Western Tyrol, unlimited partibility is inhibited by the fact that use rights to communal pasture and forest are tied to an original number of "hearths," which may not be increased. Even with partibility in land, such stipulations often demand a measure of cooperation from heirs who might otherwise operate their plots independently. It seems to me, therefore, that what is crucial in inheritance practice is not the existence of the rule as such, but *its use in the context of the market*, which converts land into a freely circulating commodity (Polanyi 1957:72). Once land is viewed in this way, partibility quickly creates a market for land, with many people buying and selling plots. Secondly, areas with high partibility soon produce a population which must supplement income from land with an income from some other source of activity. Areas with partibility thus frequently become areas of supplementary craft production or small-scale industry (Habbakuk, 1955:8-10). In the context of a market, however, impartibility stems the trend towards the free circulation of land: preference is given to maintenance of the descent group at the expense of commodity circulation. The governing ideal is that of the homestead as a guarantee for subsistence. To maintain this guarantee, the strategic factors of production must remain in the hands of a single operator, the primary heir; they must not be dispersed through cash transactions.

It is this ideal which underlines what one might call ecological considerations. In mountain country, a viable farmstead must include plowland, meadowland, pasture, and woodland. For the Tyrol, such a farmstead must comprise about 10-15 hectares of plowland and meadow if it is to feed a family of five; access to

pasture and woodland is usually obtained through use-rights over communal pasture and forest. At intermediate altitudes with a middling quality of soil, 5 hectares of plowland and meadow will suffice to fulfill the same basic purpose. In the low-lying vineyard areas, the same end can be met with the possession of 2-3 hectares of cultivated land. As we go from mountain to valley, therefore, land use becomes increasingly intensive. At the same time, it becomes more feasible to divide land into economically useful plots. Options for partibility thus increase, as intensity of cultivation increases. Partibility is least feasible where farmsteads depend heavily upon livestock keeping, as well as agriculture, e.g. in the Northeastern Tyrol where land under grain constitutes only one fourth of land in use and plowland is often returned to meadow. Partibility, however, becomes increasingly feasible, where less land is needed to feed a family. Thus in the Western Tyrol — where partibility is the dominant inheritance pattern — valleys are protected against heavy summer rains and cold northerly winds; environmental conditions favor relatively intensive and continuous cultivation of grain crops without fallowing; and a family can make a go of a small holding built upon inheritance from both the father's and the mother's side. But what this teaches is that ecological considerations make sense only in the context of wider economic involvements. Let us take this one step further. In areas with high partibility we shall not only find free circulation of land and supplementary sources of income; we shall also find wage-labor and the ready use of cash in the remuneration of wage-labor. In areas dominated by impartibility, on the other hand, the homestead still strive towards self-subsistence, if not self-sufficiency. Many goods for daily use will still be made on the homestead itself. And, most importantly, labor — usually furnished by the disinherited younger sons and daughters — is most often paid in kind, from produce raised on the farm itself, and least often in money. "Cash talks;" but under the regime of impartible inheritance it is most often wise to keep it silent.

When I first perceived the contrast between partible and impartible inheritance, I thought of it initially as a cultural contrast between populations with Germanic traditions and those of Mediterranean cultural provenience. This hypothesis has been put forward most recently by Barthel Huppertz (1939) who regarded

impartible inheritance as the legacy of a hypothetical Nordic culture and partible inheritance in the German Southwest as a consequence of the spread of Mediterranean urbanism. In this Southwestern German zone he included Alsace, the Palatinate, the Rhineland, as well as large areas of Baden, Württemberg, Hessen, Thuringia, and Northern Bavaria. If one wished to strengthen his point, one could point further to the prevalence of partibility in other regions bordering upon the Italic cultural sphere: to Switzerland, to the Western Tyrol, and to the Eastern Dolomites. In the Western Tyrol Rhaeto-Romanic (or Neo-Latin) speech prevailed into the modern period, and Roman law encouraging partibility was here administered by the Bishopric of Chur. In the Eastern Dolomites, similarly, we find a Rhaeto-Romanic population, with presumed Mediterranean affinities.

The story is, however, more complicated than this. The hypothesis of an original pattern of indivisible inheritance among the Germanic-speakers has now been abandoned by most scholars: it is no longer permissible to argue from present-day impartibility to an Iron Age past. Impartible inheritance is found today in the Scandinavian countries, the putative home of the Nordics, but there was still much partibility in the 18th century, despite governmental edicts against it; in fact, it was precisely the ever-growing division of land which prompted a reaction and introduced impartibility (Roehm 1957:67). Patterns of inheritance are therefore historically variable, and not laid down once and for all in some original germ plasm. They constitute adaptive responses to a variety of conditions, some of which we have already examined. I like to think of them less as customs, frozen into some template which replicates itself generation after generations, than as strategies employed by peasants and their masters towards the realization of certain ends. They are therefore variable as those ends themselves are variable.

This is best seen in historical perspective. Partibility is most frequent in areas of old and dense settlement. The point has been made by Roehm for Baden-Wuerttemberg (1957) and by Mayer-Edenhauser for Hessen (1942); it can be extended to the Tyrol on the basis of available evidence. I am aware of the difficulties created for an interpretation of Tyrolese settlement history by the

on-going dispute between pro-Italian scholars who emphasize the replacement and incorporation of so-called Neo-Latin populations by the German-speakers, and the pro-Germans who insist that Neo-Latin settlement was insignificant, and the creation of the Tyrol primarily due to Germanic-speakers (see Minghi 1963). I see less conflict in these views, however, than nationalist scholars are wont to do. Neo-Latin settlement was always dense in the Western Tyrol: Rhaeto-Romanic was still spoken in the Vintschgau (Val Venosta) in the 17th century. This has always remained an area of partible inheritance, though impartibility is practiced occasionally on homesteads located at higher altitudes (Wopfner 1954:164). Partibility is further heavy in the Rhaeto-Romansch areas like Groeden (Gardena), as well as adjacent Virgen, Defreggen, Enneberg and Cortina d'Ampezzo. Partibility is further heavy on the valley floors of the Etsch (Adige) where you have a vinicultural complex of clear Italic derivation (Tumler-Mayr 1924). Germanic-speakers make their earliest appearance in the Pustertal (Pusteria) and in the Central zone (Passeer, Ulten, Sarntal) in the 6th and 7th centuries. The period of major Germanic settlement however, occurs under manorial auspices in the 11th-13th centuries, when settlement is pushed into the great forests and into the high mountain pastures. Place names here are frequently Neo-Latin and indicate a prior Neo-Latin use of pasture and forest resources. It would be surprising indeed if no biological contact occurred between Germanic-speakers and Neo-Latins; the dominant sociology of the area, however, is clearly one created by Germanic settlement under feudal sponsorship. This is also the area of strong impartibility. Impartibility was further imposed on those valley bottoms of Etsch (Adige) and Eisack (Isarco) which were made available through flood control projects from the late 17th century on.

We may not assume, however, that impartibility characterized the Baiuvaric population before this extension of settlement. The *Lex Baiuvariorum* depicts what anthropologists have come to call a nonunilineal descent group. The main rule states that a dead man's property is to go his children, and further to his children's children. Only when direct descendants are lacking, may the property go to other heirs within seven degrees of relationship. Women are not discriminated against. Division is equal: *fratres*,

æqualiter dividant. Descendants are expected to take up their shares separately, and are not expected to manage the property in common, a trait that marks the Langobard and Burgundian codes.

Interestingly, inheritance patterns are intimately connected with patterns of male polygamy and widow remarriage. A widow retains rights to a part of her husband's property as long as she does not remarry. Upon remarriage her descendants by her first husband can demand the return of this portion; but her dowry and other property brought into the first marriage remain her own. If she remains childless in the second marriage, her descendants from the first marriage inherit this as well. If she bears children in her second marriage, these children inherit as well the dowry and other property brought into the first marriage — a pattern categorically prohibited among the Salic Franks and Alemanni. In the case of descendants of one father by various mothers, each descendant inherits from his father and also from his biological mother. The *Lex* thus corresponds to practices we still encounter in the areas dominated by partibility within our area of concern: *Vatergut* and *Muttergut* remain conceptually distinct. The *Lex* also speaks of sales of plowland, cattle, waste land, meadows and woods; of pawning; of land given as gifts; and of indebtedness. Contrary to some opinions, therefore, we are dealing with a culture which clearly attaches commodity values to property rights in land.

Impartibility in our area is associated in the main with the expansion of manorial jurisdiction into newly settled zones. We owe to Alfons Dopsch the correction of the traditional view that manorial economy was mainly oriented towards subsistence and self-sufficiency. Dopsch has demonstrated the degree to which manors were engaged in rational economizing and profit-taking from early times on. Moreover, he has demonstrated the incorrectness of the view that manorial economy was first based on the cultivation of the Lord's demesne farm, with labor furnished by serfs in payment of dues, and only later by separate producers cultivating their own land and paying money rents of the lord. Demesne farming and independent cultivation with money rents exist side by side from Carolingian times on; rented land was already more extensive than demesne land in the Carolingian period. These considerations have a strong

bearing on the subject of inheritance patterns. On the one hand, manorial economy strove to create optimally efficient units of cultivation. On the other hand, it tried to limit hereditary rights to land, in order to insure effective and efficient management of the land. Friedrich Luetge (1952:66) has recently shown that the celebrated *Hufe* (Lat.: *mansus*; Ger.: *hova, hoba, huoba*), the holding capable of guaranteeing the existence of a peasant family and its capacity to pay dues, is not an old Germanic trait, but a measure created in the interests of rational farming and accounting by the manorial lords, concerned with such tasks as the creation of new settlements, the apportionment of dues, the regulation of use rights, and so forth. We thus owe to the lords of manors the concept of an optimum combination of factors of production which has remained the guiding principle in keeping a homestead impartible, down to the present day. Precisely for the same reasons, they strove to maintain short-term tenures for one life time only (*iure precario*) or free rights of disposition (*libere instituendi ac destituendi*). "In this fashion," says Dopsch (1964:215), "they were able not only to inhibit the alienation of property, but also to deprive the peasant of the holding in case of non-payment of rent." Even where heritable rights were granted, these were often combined with supervisory rights which gave the granting institution opportunities to interfere in case of improper cultivation. Where grants were most liberal, they still included the stipulation that the cultivator live on the land and farm it. Moreover, he was not permitted to alienate the property to individuals who were not members of the manorial population, the so-called *familia*. Dopsch and others have pointed out that this period of pioneer expansion led to mutual dependence between lord and peasant, with the manor often furnishing seed, cattle, and tools, and guaranteeing the peasant against natural and social disasters, in return for peasant labor (*Ibid.*, pp. 218-219). It is equally obvious, however, that it was peasant labor which cleared and cultivated the land; and in areas of marginal control, such as the Alpine region, overlords were often unable to prevent the acquisition of *de-facto* hereditary rights to land. The conjunction of peasant and manorial interests in the period from 800-1300 AD, therefore, tended to work increasingly to benefit the peasantry. The 13th century represents "the golden age" of peasantry in the Germanic-speaking areas.

This period of expansion came to a halt in the mid-14th century. Stagnation first made its appearance in the densely settled valleys of the Moselle and of the Rhine, all the way up to the Netherlands. Population had increased beyond the capacity of the land to carry it under given levels of technology, migration to the East had come to a temporary halt, and the developing towns were unable to accept and use rural population surpluses. Under these conditions, partibility made a renewed appearance in order to distribute available land more widely among the existing population (Luetge 1958:382). Population pressure, however, is suddenly reversed by the onset of the Black Death; at the same time, agricultural prices drop sharply. Many homesteads are abandoned. In the south and west of Germany, the acreage of such abandoned farms has been placed as high as one-half of the area cultivated previously; the statistical mode for Germany as a whole is set at 25 percent. Many manorial lords faced ruin: the greatest of manorial corporations, the Order of the Teutonic Knights, fell into bankruptcy. There was land for the taking, and many peasants took advantage of this to occupy land. They soon, however, faced another overlord: this time the territorial ruler.

Everywhere the territorial rulers exploited the weakness of the landed aristocracy to assert their own power. Acting in conjunction with the town bourgeoisie, they asserted a renewed jurisdiction over the countryside. There came into existence that curious coalition between territorial ruler, weak aristocracy and an urban middle and upper class not yet grown strong through industrial development which was to govern the German and Austrian South down to the end of the 19th century. It was not strong enough to undertake real economic development on the Dutch or English model; but it was strong enough to impose new forms of bureaucratic supervision over the rural areas. This time it was the state which strove to stabilize and regiment agriculture. The *Hufen-order* with optimally scaled homesteads and farmsteads was reinforced and peasant holdings were rendered increasingly impartible, all in the interest of a viable system of taxation (Luetge 1958: 383). At the same time, the territorial rulers strove to make the peasantry directly responsible to them, rather than to the manorial overlords. Hereditary rights to land were granted to peasants in Salzburg as early as the 14th century. Duke Heinrich

the Rich of Bavaria-Landshut followed suit by selling hereditary land rights to large classes of peasants at the end of the 15th century, and the Habsburgs granted similar rights to the Tyrolese since 1404. In 1504 the three previously Bavarian districts of Rattenberg, Kufstein and Kitzbuehel were merged with Tyrol; their peasants received rights to the same Tyrolese liberties. In the main, such concessions occurred in the Bavarian East and in Tyrol, but not in the Bavarian West and South where rights of free disposition by manorial lords remained intact. Luetge (1949: 93) points to the fact that this manorial belt occurs in generally more impoverished and less productive areas, and argues that the peasantry there was less able to throw off manorial jurisdiction because poverty made them more dependent upon the manorial lords. I would suggest that for the same reasons the territorial ruler had less interest in interfering with manorial jurisdiction, since the income to be drawn from these areas was not worth the political effort. Such differential treatment of the manorial overlords however, produced a divergence between Bavaria and the Tyrol. While in Bavaria most peasants remained under manorial jurisdiction or came under renewed manorial rule in the course of time, the Tyrolese were substantially freed of manorial overlords. At the end of the 18th century, 96 percent of Bavarian homesteads still owed manorial services and dues; only 4 per cent were wholly free (Luetge 1949:98). In the Tyrol, in contrast, peasants began to obtain their freedom from the 14th century on and by the 15th century had reduced serfdom to a relic (Wopfner 1960:520).

Where before the 14th century the manorial lords had defended impartibility against peasant claims, now they often favored partibility in order to increase their money income from inheritance taxes and from a multiplication of dues on an increasing number of homesteads. Partibility also increased heavily in areas where artisan work became important — as in Reichenhall, Berchtesgaden, Mittenwald, and Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Bavaria — or where a considerable portion of the population engaged in mining, as in the Tyrol. This time, however, it was the territorial ruler who defended agricultural efficiency through the maintenance of impartible homesteads, and increasingly insisted on impartibility. Such considerations are clearly evident in the Bavarian edicts of 1616, 1674, and 1681, and in the Tyrolese

laws of 1404 and 1532. In the 18th century, however, there is renewed change, and one which produces differential results in Bavaria and the Tyrol. Under the influence of mercantilist ideas, the Bavarian rulers reverse their positions. Arguing that many peasant holdings are too large to achieve an increase of productivity per unit of land, in 1762 and 1772, they initiated efforts to get peasants to divide their land among several heirs. Under the influence of similar ideas, however, Tyrol under Habsburg aegis maintained the sway of impartibility. Laws pronounced in 1770 and 1785 required the impartible homesteads to be listed in a special register; their division was summarily prohibited. Partibility was, however, declared optional for freely circulating plots of land smaller than 36 ar if plowland, 18 ar if meadowland. In the Tyrol, law reinforced practice; in Bavaria it ran counter to peasant norms. Nevertheless Bavarian peasants maintained impartibility *de facto*. Heavily decimated by the effects of the Thirty Years' War and coping with a sufficiency of land and an insufficiency of labor, they resisted governmental policy and maintained farm "closure."

This resistance to partible inheritance continues in most areas of Bavaria and the Tyrol down to the present day. Impartible inheritance remains the rule, despite the effects of the Napoleonic occupation which applied the Napoleonic code, with its injunction of partibility, to Bavaria and the Tyrol alike; despite the arguments that liberal economists advanced against impartibility and despite the passage of laws favoring partibility such as the one pronounced by the liberal diet of Vienna in 1868. The Tyrolese successfully resisted application of this law to the Tyrol, substituting their own Homestead Law of 1900 which guarantees impartible inheritance of the eldest son (Bar 1935). Such resistance was aided substantially by growing German tendencies towards a militarized autarchy in the second half of the 19th century, a trend which culminated in the National Socialist Law of Hereditary Entailed Estates of 1933. This law made single-heir inheritance the focal point of a regimented agriculture, and acted as a forced draft in propelling the disinherited younger sons towards the growing armament industry and into the army. In 1938, as a result of the German occupation of Austria, the law was extended to the Tyrol.

Nor did the end of World War II reverse the trend. The stringent and inflexible parts of the *Reichserbhofgesetz* have once again been set aside; but impartibility continues to hold sway. In Bavaria, most areas are under impartible inheritance rule, mitigated only by occasional modifications in the direction of granting the largest portion to the one son — whose choice remains optional and need not be either the oldest or youngest — with portions going to the other heirs (Roem, 1962). In the North Tyrol, about half of all homesteads remain impartible. Even in the South Tyrol, ceded to Italy after World War I and subject to special pressures under Fascist rule, impartibility remains the dominant pattern. In 1929 Mussolini abrogated the Tyrolese law and introduced Roman law as mandatory in the province: partibility was to be the order of the day. In spite of the repeated exercise of force, however, the Germanic-speaking population resisted this intended change. In 1952 the autonomous province of Bozen (Bolzano) reinstated the role of the closed homestead in practice, and wrote practice into law in 1954. According to available data, 44.8 per cent of all homesteads larger than half a hectare were again declared impartible.

We may now ask why this pattern of inheritance has proved so resistant to change. Obviously it has served at one time or another to support the interests of peasants or overlords, sometimes of both of them together. Yet there is still another aspect that is usually disregarded, the relation of this kind of inheritance pattern to the maintenance of a social structure. I would suggest that we need to interpret impartible inheritance not merely as a strategy for economic ends; it is also a strategy which creates and maintains a social order, a distribution of rights and disabilities, hence a structure of power. On the homestead with indivisible inheritance, the principal heir is king. His wife is a domestic manager; his brothers and sisters — if they do not migrate away — provide a ready supply of labor, for himself or others like himself in the vicinity. Unable to marry, since they do not possess claims to a homestead, they are usually paid in kind from the produce raised on the estate itself. The more such a homestead is affected by the wider outside market and its crises, the greater its need to maintain a pool of cheap labor; the greater also its requirement for a tractable and manageable labor force. Impartible inheritance

at one and the same time creates this labor pool and furnishes its patriarchal managers. In contrast to the agro-proletarians of the German and Austro-Hungarian East, the disinherited siblings become family servants, united to their employers by ties of kinship and friendship. Such family servants, Tibor Kolossa (1961:262) points out, cannot form a sharply crystallized social category. They live in common domestic economy with their more favored brothers; they are under the sway of their aspirations; they remain under the heir's firm social control. "Nowheres do they form a concentrated, strong, solidary mass." Instead, says Kolossa, they remain "scattered, divided, powerless."

Only the economic decline of the years between World War I and World War II, the upheaval of the war years, and the structural shifts of the post-war period have effectively challenged this pattern of superordination and subordination. If my own field experience in the South Tyrol is characteristic of wider areas, as I believe it is, it was primarily through the advent of National Socialism and through its incorporation of the disinherited siblings into a dynamic and militaristic *Reich* that this dependent population came to envisage for itself new social roles in a greater society beyond the confines of their individual homesteads. While their older brothers remained in command of their farms, the younger sons and daughters answered the call of social mobilization. This trend has proved to be irreversible. Although the Thousand-Year *Reich* went down in flames, the pull of the German economy continues, steadily drawing the younger sons and daughters into industrial employment to the North. This pull is reinforced by the vast growth of tourism which furnishes for many new sources of work in assorted service trades. Perhaps machines will ultimately be able to replace labor on the wealthiest and most viable homesteads; but the exodus from the land threatens the continuing survival of the remainder. The price of this trend may be the decline of the impartible homestead that once stood like a peasant fortress in the midst of the surrounding landscape; its gain may be a new freedom for those disinherited by a social order that has its roots in the feudal expansion of the early Middle Ages.

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