

Diverse relazioni trattano anche questioni più generali, così ad es. H. Pavis d'Escurac, "À propos de l'approvisionnement en blé des cités de l'Orient romain". A proposito dell'approvvigionamento di grano anche in altre parti del volume, p. 31, 40, 109 ecc., si trova materiale rilevante. In sede critica si potrebbe notare che ciò non risulta in nessun luogo mancando, purtroppo, qualsiasi tipo di indice. Questo fatto non incide comunque sui pregi del volume, che contiene documentazioni e opinioni di riguardo, e non solo per gli studiosi dell'Asia Minore e della Siria.

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*Peter Garnsey: Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World. Responses to Risk and Crisis. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988. 303 p. GBP 25.00.*

Once one starts seriously to consider questions related to food production and the feeding of people in classical antiquity, there is no limit to the magnitude of the topics one encounters. In fact, the history of the classical world could just as well be written focussing on these kinds of problems as on events belonging to the sphere of political history. The present book constitutes a major argument for such an approach to ancient history. In dealing with food production and provisioning it discusses for instance Athenian imperialism, the political events at the beginning of the Roman Republic and the social struggles of the late Republic, when the question of the corn dole was an important issue.

The book is composed of four parts, the first of which deals with basic concepts such as "food shortage" and "famine". To differentiate between such phenomena is not merely an academic question, because while a real famine was equivalent to a demographic catastrophe, such as were caused by other natural events like earthquakes, and which left the people helpless, food shortages of various degrees could be alleviated if only the right measures were taken. But in such cases it was always a question of the policy chosen by the communities or the state, and therefore these cases are of great interest to social and political history.

The second part, "Survival Strategies", deals with the reactions of city dwellers and peasants in the face of food shortages and with measures to avoid such problems. While the treatment is partly in the form of a general survey, it also stresses the importance of being specific, and deals critically with an old concept, "the typical ancient peasant". This second part of the book could also be called "Responses to Risk and Crises", an expression clearly influenced by sociology and found in the title of the book. Sociology can also be said to

have inspired the first two parts of the book in a general way, as the author frequently uses parallels and comparisons. As a detail one may notice that reference is also made to Finnish experiences; a work by the doyen of Finnish agrarian history, E. Jutikkala, ("The Great Finnish Famine in 1696-97", *Scand. Econ.Hist.Rev.* 3 [1955]) is cited on p. 29 as a source concerning the existence of cannibalism in extreme states of famine. Actually, no statement to that effect can be found in this paper, but Mr. Garnsey might still of course be right about the occurrence of such horrors in post-classical societies.

Part III (Food Supply and Food Crises in Athens c. 600 - 322 BC) is a demonstration of what the author's method can yield. One of the conclusions is that the imperialistic features of archaic, VI century Athens cannot be explained as being caused by grain-shortage in Attica; this situation occurred only later. This hypothesis, which goes against current opinion, is based on much calculating of populations, of harvest yields and of arable land. One can surmise that supporters of earlier theories will point to the impossibility of reaching exact figures. But everybody will surely agree that the hypothesis presented is stimulating.

The responses of the ruling classes to the problems of providing the whole population with enough food were, not surprisingly, primarily dictated by their own selfish interests. But the measures taken varied from time to time and from place to place. In part IV (Food Supply and Food Crises in Rome c. 509 BC - AD 250) Mr. Garnsey points out one difference between the Greek and the Roman world. Benefaction on a private basis was always one important way of dealing with food shortage in Greek cities, though it was not tolerated during the Roman Republic. During the empire, the emperor had the prerogative of aiding the inhabitants of the capital, while private benefactors were welcome in municipal towns.

This is, of course, not a new observation, but then it must be kept in mind that the book has been written partly for the general public (witness p. 276 "Octavianus (the later Augustus)"), a fact which is also given on the dust jacket. Furthermore, as the objective of Mr. Garnsey is to present a new light on ancient history, it is unavoidable that some of the material and its treatment will already be well known. This goes especially for the last part dealing with the Roman world, where in the opinion of the reviewer G. Rickman's "The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome" (1980) still remains more rewarding on many topics.

Altogether, this is a stimulating book, concluding with a useful index and a large bibliography, to which further items could be added – an indication of the magnitude of this topic and an indication of the fertile prospects for further studies. (Some recent works are e.g. H. Pavis d'Escurac, *À propos de l'approvisionnement en blé des cités de l'Orient romain*, in *Sociétés urbaines*,

sociétés rurales ..., Strasbourg 1987 [rev. in this volume of *Arctos*] and J. Strubbe, *The sitonia in the Cities of Asia Minor under the Principate I*, *Epigr.Anat.* 10 [1987] 45-81).

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*Gabriel Herman: Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City.*  
Cambridge University Press, 1987. XIII, 212 p. GBP 25.00.

It is astonishing that the phenomenon of *ksenia*, usually translated as guest-friendship, has hitherto not been adequately dealt with in classical scholarship – neither in detail nor in its larger contexts. However, it is a concept which we meet all the time when reading Greek literature – in Homer, in drama, in history – and an institution which apparently was as important in ancient Greek society as it is strange to our modern minds. Gabriel Herman sets out to map and examine this concept in its different forms. He sees it as a social institution belonging to the anthropological category of ritualised personal relations, marked by clear rules of initiation and behaviour and clear social group boundaries – it is essentially a relationship between persons originating from different social systems and, at the same time, between persons belonging to the upper social strata. The institution is fully developed in the Homeric epics, and one of the most fascinating views offered by this book is to follow how it survived in the sociological and political changes brought by the development of the Greek city state. The conflict to be expected between the inherited loyalties of ritualised friendship and the new loyalties demanded by the democratic state is graphically pictured in the confrontation described in two passages of literature. First Herman opens his discussion with the meeting of Diomedes and Glaukos in the battle (Il. 6, 224ff.), in which they cease hostility when they discover that their grandfathers were bound by *ksenia*; and then gives the incident related by Xenophon from the year 394 B.C. (Hell. 4,1,34-5), where the Persian satrap Pharnabazos reproaches King Agesilaos of Sparta for having ravaged his private estates, despite the fact that Pharnabazos had been a friend and ally of Sparta, and Agesilaos disclaims all personal responsibility, with an appeal to his duty towards his state, which surpasses any obligations of ritual friendship. Discussing these obligations, which can take the form of exchanged gifts (natural products, money, or landed property) and of assistance (ranging from the education of the friend's son to political or military support), Herman throws new light on many aspects of the social and political life of the Greeks. This book will be read with profit by students and scholars of literature, history and sociology alike. The exposition of the theory and its