

FRANCESCO GRELLE: *Diritto e società nel mondo romano*. A cura di L. FANIZZA. Saggi di storia antica 26. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Roma 2005. ISBN 88-8265-324-2. XVI, 561 pp. EUR 290.

Salutiamo con grande piacere questa raccolta di alcuni scritti di Francesco Grelle, il noto romanista barese. Nella produzione di Grelle, particolarmente coinvolgente e produttiva appare la sua ricostruzione della "storia locale" relativa ad ambiti storicamente significativi, per quanto delimitati, in nulla diversa dalla "grande storia", pur con le sue peculiarità; questi ambiti territoriali sono gravidi di nuove informazioni che solo l'anatomia del territorio può rilevare. In questo ambito un ruolo particolare rivestono proprio i suoi numerosi studi su Canosa romana, poi raccolti in un volume nel 1993. E' stato ispiratore del progetto di creazione del corpus delle epigrafi romane di Canosa, raccolte e commentate in due volumi (Bari 1985 e 1990). E non mancano altri studi su Canosa, alcuni dei quali ripresi nella presente collana. In Francesco Grelle si deve sottolineare una simbiosi di giurista e storico. Attenzione alle fonti unite con una visione larga dei vari problemi che il mondo offre. Tutto sommato, si tratta di una lettura stimolante, raccomandabile a tutti coloro che vogliono approfondirsi nella storia romana.

*Heikki Solin*

PAUL ERDKAMP: *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-83878-8 (hb), 978-0-521-11783-8 (pb). XIV, 364 pp. GBP 62, USD 111 (hb), GBP 21.99, USD 39.99 (pb).

Once upon a time a professor of economic history told me that, in books on economic history, the text is quite superfluous. The crux of the argument should be found and the majority of the effort of the author should be directed to the tables and graphs. The main difference between quantitative and qualitative research is that the first exposes the truth through a scientific method, while the latter is just a collection of opinions from people, be they ancient or modern observers. Because people are frequently unreliable and their observations subjective, the text that is based on them suffers from the same defects. Quantifiable information, analyzed with scientific statistical analysis, would offer an unbiased view that transcends the limitations of human observers. Good economic history would thus reveal not what the contemporaries thought but what actually took place.

Paul Erdkamp, a noted scholar of Roman military history, has written a book on Roman economic history which does not have a single table, graph or other tool of statistical analysis. As is evident to every student of Roman history, the topic is of utmost importance. The Roman Empire was in essence consisted, in addition to the countryside, of a number of large cities, and the organization of food supply to those cities was the prerequisite of the very existence of the empire. The size of the cities, with Rome in a class by itself, was far too large to be supported by their immediate hinterland which is why an elaborate grain market existed to supply them with grain from areas with large surplus production such as North Africa, Egypt and the Black Sea. The aim of the book is to examine the functioning of the grain market, the mechanisms with which, to take a famous example grain from Egypt, was acquired, transported and delivered to the Roman plebs. Because of its general importance, the grain market was heav-