D. Accorinti: Constas, Proclus of Constantinople

In conclusione: un libro, questo di C., ἡμιτέλης, soprattutto per la velleità del suo autore di inserirvi un’edizione raffazzonata delle Ἑωμ. 1–5 di Proclo, ma anche per la complice leggerezza con cui da qualche tempo gli editori inanellano te-sti nelle loro collane, mirando piuttosto alla quantità che alla qualità di ciò che viene pubblicato.

Pisa

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Historical geography has been established as an important and integrated part of the study of the ancient world in the last decades. In German ‘Altertums-wissenschaft’ the most obvious example of this tendency are the volumes of Geographica Historia that include several proceedings of the ‘Stuttgarter Kollo-quium zur historischen Geographie des Altertums’.

Many archaeologists and historians have tried to apply different modern geographical theories to Antiquity in order to compensate for the few and dispersed ancient sources. Two of the most popular models have been the so-called Central-Place Theory developed by the German geographer W. Cristaller more than seventy years ago and J. H. von Thünen’s model of agrarian location. The latter theory was already formulated in ‘Der isolierte Staat in Beziehung auf Landwirtschaft und Nationalökonomie’ (1823), but has only been adopted by ancient hi-

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The first part of the title is a quotation from Cato the Censor’s agricultural handbook *De agri cultura* (1. 3), and the three Roman agronomists form the basic sources of the study. The introduction (3–12) contains first a list of ‘Standortfaktoren’ and the object of the study is then presented: «Hier sollen, ausgehend von den Standorterwägungen der römischen Agrarökonomen, die Zusammenhänge von Verkehrs-, Transport- und Marktbedingungen, die daraus resultierenden Markt- und Raumordnungen, sowie die sozial- und wirtschaftshistorische Bedeutung dieser Ordnungsstrukturen untersucht werden’ (9). It is a very ambitious aim, and F. restricts with good reasons the area of study to Italy in the Late Republic and the Early Empire on which most of our sources are concentrated.

The analysis consists of five parts. The first chapter (13–50) deals with three Roman agricultural writers Cato, Varro and Columella and their advice about the best positions of the estates. It is well-known that the three agronomists wrote on the basis of personal experience and that their description is aimed at farms characterized by a market-oriented production of wine, olives and grain, and to a lesser extent of other vegetable and animal produce. The crops produced on the farms were sold, and there should therefore be an easy access to the market. F. quotes Cato, Varro and Columella at length in German translation with the original Latin text in the endnotes. The lengthy quotations put the advice in their context and, according to the author, should facilitate the reading of the book. But citations of ancient sources fill up almost a third of the book, and summaries including references would have been adequate in many cases. The passages bring nothing new, although it is useful to have the material collected in one volume.

In the first chapter F. touches very briefly on several of the important questions about the villa economy and its transformation in the Late Republic and Early Empire, but often in a rather disappointing way. Two examples will suffice. The reference (40 n. 91) to a discussion of the epigraphic and archaeological material concerning the crucial problem of the development of the sizes of the estates is to an outdated German dissertation published in 1965. Secondly, F. argues that the increasing importance of tenants, *coloni*, in the Early Empire was a result of increasing prices on slaves after the continuous wars ended by the death of Augustus and the concentration of land in still fewer hands (48–49). But the theory of an increase of the slave prices has never been confirmed, and it is important to stress that the option between tenant farmers and direct exploitation of an estate through slaves under supervision of a bailiff was a choice between different forms of management – not between different forms of labour since the tenants often used their own working slaves.

The second section (51–92) discusses the location of markets in Roman Italy. The well-known inscriptions and relief...
F. elaborates a model developed by P. W. de Neeve on the basis of von Thünen’s location theory, in which a pattern of zones or circles with different agrarian systems centred around the market. F. points out that de Neeve’s model is very abstract and that the late Dutch scholar did not discuss the exact distances of certain products. The chapter closes with a survey of Roman wagons and ships with illustrations in such a poor quality that important technical details cannot be distinguished. The digression seems, however, only to be a bridge to the third and most interesting part (93–106) of the book.

W. Cristaller argued that every good had a minimum and maximum range determined by the costs of transport. F. now tries to establish new distances for the transport of agricultural goods to the cities of Roman Italy. He draws up different formulae to calculate the maximum distance of agricultural goods over land, river and sea. The models are given like mathematical formulae and results are given in a table with two decimals (98). F. stresses that the figures should only be understood «als Maßstäbe für Größenordnungen und nicht als – sicher anfechtbare – genaue Distanzangaben» (105). The results are open to much criticism, and two decimals indicate a precision that we would never achieve using figures taken from different ancient sources.

The social and economic consequences of F.’s calculations are in focus in the last part of the book (107–146). Three points are in focus: the number of inhabitants in the Italian cities, including Rome, and the two supposed agricultural crises in Italy in third and second century BC and first century AD. Through a number of calculations F. reaches the result that most cities had 2,000–5,000 inhabitants, but more controversial are the consequences of these number games on the agricultural structure in Roman Italy to which I shall return. The brief conclusion (147–151) summarizes the results of the investigation.

The analyses in ‘Eine wohlhabende Stadt sei nahe...’ are highly speculative, and the results are at best consultative. F. is forced to combine uncertain numbers from many different sources in order to carry through his calculations. Yet the most serious shortcoming of the F.’s book is the omission of most scholarly works in this field published in the last fifteen years. The bibliography takes up twelve pages. A quick glance reveals, however, that it includes several contributions in dictionaries, and only four titles in French and one in Italian published more than twenty years ago. Also the English and German literature is mostly rather old, and it is surprising, since F. does not base his investigation primarily on the ancient sources. He is not the first and will probably not be the last to apply the Central Place-theory to markets in antiquity, but two of the most important recent contributions using the same geographical theories as F. on markets and the development in the economy of Roman Italy 200 BC – AD 200 by L. de Ligt and N. Morley do not even appear in the bibliography, although they both adopted von Thünen’s model in discussing location of markets and the effect of transport costs! This omission is very characteristic of the book. F. takes up many topics of Roman economic and social history lively discussed in the last decades, but the recent controversies are not included in the work. A few exam-

ples will suffice to illustrate that this ignorance impairs seriously the value of the whole study.

The point of departure in F.'s calculations of maximum distance of agricultural goods to the urban market is Columella's famous calculation of vineyard profitability and the analysis by R. P. Duncan-Jones in 'The Economy of the Roman Empire'. F. points out that the costs of bringing the goods to the market are not included in the calculations made by Columella and Duncan-Jones. F. ignores other recent criticism of Duncan-Jones. It is astonishing because A. Carandini tried to argue for a dual economy in Roman agriculture and drew a parallel with the feudal economy of sixteenth century Poland. According to Carandini, there was a domestic production on the farm, in which economic calculation was impossible, and a market sector responsive to market prices and costs.¹

The two other examples are the picture of Roman farms and villas and the agricultural crisis in second century AD. The reference for a »zusammenfassenden Überblick zum Stand der archäologischen Forschung zu den Villen in Italien« (143) is T. W. Potter's Ro-

man Italy in its German translation. This book is still an excellent introduction, but it should not be the only reference to Roman villas and the changes of rural production in Italy in the Late Replic Republic and Early Empire. The publication of many excavations and surveys in the last decade has modified the picture given by Potter on important issues, and A. Carandini has developed the much-discussed theory of the transformation in Italy from the slave-based market-oriented 'villa centrale' to 'la villa periferica' character-

ised by a self-sufficiency. These terms do not appear in F.'s study. Other historians and archaeologists have questioned the evidence of an agricultural crisis in second century Italy. J. R. Patterson asked the important question 'Crisis: what crisis?', but his arguments are passed over in silence and Patterson's article does not appear in the bibliography.²

Missing is also the important volume on 'L'Italie d'Auguste à Dioclétien' (1994) with many important contributions of A. Carandini, J. R. Patterson, D. Vera and C. R. Whit-
taker and survey of the discussion on the agricultural and economic development in Italy.

In sum, F.'s book is disappointing. The theme is important, but his analysis does not throw new light on Roman economy, and the study does not contribute substantially to the advancement of our understanding of agricultural production and markets in Roman Italy.

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² J. R. Patterson, Crisis: what crisis? Rural change and development in Imperial Appen-

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