



Francqui Foundation Conference

Long-Term Quantification in Ancient Mediterranean History

Claude Diebolt (CNRS – Université de Strasbourg), *The stakes of cliometrics in ancient history*

According to Finley, markets and economic motivations played little, if any, role in ancient economies. Status and civic ideology governed the allocation of scarce resources. Hence, the application of economic theory to the ancient economy was at best a futile exercise and at worst a source of grave misunderstandings. Temin's seminal and continued contributions to the field lead to the opposite conclusion and, as in the myth of Sisyphus, the boulder seems again to be at the bottom of the hill! My feeling is that the Gordian knot remains the same now as over the past decades: should cliometrics be used in the social sciences/humanities in general, and ancient history especially?