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The dynamics of life : demography and the history of Roman Italy (201 BC - AD 14)

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STELLINGEN

1. The debate over demographic developments in Italy has severely undervalued the potential of the behavioural sciences to advance our knowledge.
2. Whereas the importance of agricultural opportunities to population developments has fully been recognized by ancient historians when it comes to the mere availability of land, the importance of climatologic conditions changing the economic value of this land has been undervalued.
3. Roman marriage and fertility patterns had as much to do with culture as they did with economy. *Contra*: Brunt (1987²), Chapter 11.
4. The confidence of ancient historians in their ability to establish the magnitude of the demographic impact of (the growth of) the city of Rome is mistaken. Current accepted 'knowledge' is based on uncritical and unsophisticated transference of comparative data on northwestern European early modern cities which are demographically incomparable.
5. The literary and epigraphic texts on which our understanding of what the Roman census purported to register and count is dependent, allow for a 'middle count' interpretation.
6. If only ancient historians would know that a 40-minute, monotonously read-out paper could be a 20-minute, colourful slideshow with special effects, they would criticize American 'superficiality' less.
7. A visit to a refreshingly weird conference every once in a while is the best medicine against tunnel-vision symptoms.
8. Writing would be more efficient if one could start by cutting.
9. A pioneering mentality is the only tradition worth following in research.
10. Measuring is knowing – if only one asks the right questions. Arguably, science would therefore be helped if we dared asking not only about IQ and EQ, but also about 'CQ' as a measure of 'common sense'.
11. It is advisable to share a block with one's advisor. Nearby presence of libraries without fines and limited numbers of predators on books greatly speeds up the writing process. So does the pressing knowledge that offices-around-the-corner are manned at all hours and about to spit out yet another article that one wouldn't want to have to incorporate in one's dissertation also.
12. If Leiden University wishes to propagate the message that sex really does not matter in science, it is difficult to find a convincing argument why the sex of female researchers alone should be marked out on office door-signs and official documents.
13. Dutch PhD students should be more creative in establishing their own deadlines for lack of institutionally enforced ones. Competitions involving public embarrassment are recommendable.