

Summary

European culture is based on three pillars that can be represented by three hills: the Acropolis of Athens symbolizing Greek philosophy, the Capitol denoting Roman law and Golgotha representing Christianity. The European legal consciousness is still shaped by Roman law understood as a universal set of principles and norms that underlie the legal systems of today's Europe. Studying the social resonance of the law and its impact on everyday life cannot be limited solely to the analysis of high culture sources. Reaching a bit 'lower' literary texts can give answers to many questions and show some new *sensu largo* aspects of the law and its role in Europe.

Philogelos, meaning 'the one who loves laughter' is the only preserved collection of ancient jests. Jokes play a big social role, being a part of popular culture and cultural code; they usually present a good yet distorted image of everyday life, fears, joys, as well as fixations of a given community. One of the elements of this image is also the law, though not its theory but practice. From the point of view of the jurist, *Philogelos* turns out to be a surprisingly interesting source text. It gives plenty of information that is true, selective but which helps to complement the image that we know from typical legal and non-legal sources usually applied in Romanist studies. Without having it, would we know that ancient people already used 'all you can eat' offers?

The book is an in-depth study of both private and public legal issues in *Philogelos*. It adds a new perspective to the research in the field of Roman law as well as to a more general perception of the European legal culture.