
Sir Moses Finley’s influential and controversial account of the structure and workings of the ancient economy was first published some thirty years ago, yet debate on the subject continues to rage. In this collection of twelve essays, judiciously selected, artfully arranged and elegantly introduced, some high points in the debate over the ancient economy since Finley are gathered together. Two of the twelve—those by Kurke and Sailer—are published for the first time here.


Two contrasting views of the nature of the ancient economy conclude the collection—from an economist (Scott Meikle, ‘Modernism, Economics and the Ancient Economy’) and a historian (Richard Sailer, ‘Framing the Debate over Growth in the Ancient Economy’). Sailer provides a perceptive deconstruction of the entrenched dichotomy between the ‘modernist’ and ‘primitivist’ positions in contemporary scholarship, issuing a call for conceptual clarification in the controversy
over ‘significant growth’ in the ancient economy. In the wake of this article, it may be possible for the debate over the ancient economy to turn to potentially more fruitful areas—for example, the untangling of the nexus of growth, development and diffusion of technology.

The aim of the *Edinburgh Readings on the Ancient World* series is to provide stimulating, well-designed textbooks for students and their teachers, and this collection certainly achieves that goal. Explicitly designed as a teaching text, the volume contains a glossary of useful terms, a series of helpful maps and an up-to-date ‘Guide to Further Reading’. Introductory essays to each selection place the author within his or her intellectual context, identify other notable publications and highlight the essentials of the argument presented.

A great advantage of this collection is that it presents the protagonists of a variety of positions articulating their arguments clearly and persuasively, without imposing a judgment as to the strength or validity of those positions. *The Ancient Economy* will serve admirably as a text around which to build any course dealing with the ancient economy.

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