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NEVILLE MORLEY: *Theories, Models and Concepts in Ancient History*. Routledge, London and New York, 2004. ISBN 0-415-24876-0 (hb), 0-415-24877-9 (pb). 162 pp. GBP 55 (hb), 15.99 (pb).

This book purports to be an introduction to the wonderful world of historical theory, aimed specifically at a theory-ignorant student of ancient history. The book arises from Morley's (hereafter M.) own experiences with "theory," starting from his first meetings with theoretical thinking "marked by incomprehension, boredom and [. . .] catastrophic performance . . ." His later involvement with theoretical thinking has led him to write this book as a repayment of "the intellectual debt".

M. starts his repayment in the first chapter ("Approaches: the problem of theory") by presenting the position of "theory" in current classical scholarship (obstructive and complicated) and then his own view of what theory should be (constructive and clarifying). Then he investigates the uses of generalisations and models from his position, trying to show how well-defined, systemically constructed models and the use of modern concepts can open new perspectives on old problems without necessarily falling into the trap of anachronism. He stresses the point that whatever we do, we still belong to our own time, and writing history by "letting the sources speak for themselves" is impossible, as the sources do not speak, but are read and interpreted by us and therefore, it is better for the historian to recognise the present-boundedness of his own concepts.

As a solution, M. argues for well-defined concepts and against the indiscriminate use of classical words; additionally, he spends some pages strongly defending Hopkins' model-based approaches to the study of taxation in the Roman empire and Finley's theoretical concept of the "consumer city." More than the results and contents of these studies, he emphasised their methodology, with models and defined theoretical concepts, and ends his final defence in stating that the final test for a theory "is not just whether it is persuasive but whether it is productive", i.e. it opens new discussions and novel ways of seeing the subject.

In the second chapter ("Ancient and Modern. The invention of the ancient economy") M. examines the way in which ancient economies have been studied during the last decades. This is perhaps the strongest chapter of the book, reflecting M's own interest in the study of ancient economy, presenting well the primitivist - substantivist -arguments and the ongoing effect of Finleyan concepts even in recent research.

The following three chapters are more or less a description of the important research subjects in the historiography of the late 20th century. In the chapter "The limits of the possible," in sections "materialism," "*la longue durée*," "demography, diet and disease" and "ecology" M. nominally presents an argument between the "idealistic" and "materialistic" approaches, where he (in favour of the materialist approach) presents the kinds of things that have been studied from the materialistic view that the physical environment is the controlling power over culture, ideas and thinking. He follows this theme through the work of Ferdinand Braudel up to modern ecology and studies on Roman demography.

In the chapter "Class and Status" M., using the concepts of "society", "status", "class" and "politics", presents current themes in the study of the social organisation of Roman society. In practice, he is presenting his own ideas of the "structures" of Roman society, the ordering principles which renew and maintain social order. This is a well-structured but very essay-like chapter, interesting, but slightly confusing in its excessive use of analogies with later phenomena.

In the next chapter ("A sense of identity"), M. addresses the challenges brought about by the new themes of "sex", "gender" and "ethnicity" – all concepts that have their roots in feminist activism in the later 20th century. As usual, M. encapsulated these themes in a separate chapter, as if questions of identity could be separated from the structure of the society, for example. In spite of this, the chapter is quite successful in introducing the reader to the deconstruction of these basic concepts of identity as historically constructed. M. rightly stresses the fact that the uncritical application of these concepts in the study of the remote past easily leads to erroneous conclusions, since the categories the concepts define were just not present in classical times.

The last real chapter of the book is a motley collection of various concepts from diverse sources, ranging from psychology and social biology to literary theory and anthropology. As a key to these concepts, M. uses "culture", which he sets in relation to Freud's theories on unconscious and sociobiological ideas of the biological determinism of some forms of human societies. He is somewhat more successful in presenting "structuralism", as theories labelled with this name naturally deal with the separation of content and form - the dialogue between these two is often seen as the place where "culture" dwells. The anthropological "cultures" receive some criticism, but overall, M. seems to accept the use of "thick description" in certain cases, depending on the interests of the historian.

In the Afterword, M. downplays the aim of the book somewhat by explaining, that this book will not enable one to use these theoretical concepts, but will allow one to recognise them.

Considering the meaning of M's Afterword, it is a pity he has left out some very central concepts of current historical theory. The missing discussions on for example "representation" and "practice" are evident, and a major negligence on the part of the author. These concepts, while looking very innocuous, carry around a heavy bit of theoretical apparatus in contemporary historical science. What also makes them very important is, that they are products of *historical* theory, and not borrowed from social sciences.

In the beginning, M. emphasises the importance of contextualising texts, not only the primary sources we read, but also the secondary literature, as all researchers create their work in a context which should affect the way we read the texts. His own way of writing, however, does not follow this ideal, as frustratingly often he leaves the cited historians, archaeologists, sociologists, and philosophers hidden in the end-notes and the bibliography. This might be the publisher's policy, but it is confusing, especially since the notes are mostly very short.

In addition, I personally find M's concept of theory influenced very much by the social sciences. His usage of the word "theory" could be explained as "an abstract model to be applied to the data studied for its validity to be tested or denied", although this is hard to validate as M. does not explicate his own positions, which he proudly admits in the preface. His position is obvious to me, but would it be for a theoretically ignorant or reluctant

student?

The prominence of traditional research themes, emphasis on models of thinking from the social sciences and a lack of contextualisation of these discussions and models with the omission of major proponents of historical theory from the last decades make this book a subversive introduction to classical history which looks very much like a social science. I would be wary of suggesting this book as a good introduction to historical theory to a student, even though it is well written. But as M. himself states, these are matters of personal taste, and especially dependent on the kind of history in which one is interested.

Harri Kiiskinen

*Serta antiqua et mediaevalia VII: Il cittadino, lo straniero, il barbaro, fra integrazione ed emarginazione nell'antichità. Atti del I Incontro Internazionale di Storia Antica (Genova 22–24 maggio 2003). A cura di MARIA GABRIELLA ANGELI BERTINELLI e ANGELA DONATI. Università degli studi di Genova, Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità e del Medioevo. Storia Antica 4. Giorgio Bretschneider, Roma 2005. ISBN 88-7689-233-8. VII, 472 pp. EUR 250.*

Il tema del Convegno di cui si presentano gli atti, di grande attualità anche nel mondo contemporaneo e che ben coincide con la sede dell'incontro per via della convivenza e circolazione di tante e diverse culture dai tempi immemorabili nella città portuale ligure, nasce dalla considerazione e dalla definizione del ruolo del cittadino antico, o comunque degli abitanti, all'interno di una polis greca oppure di una città romana (*municipium, colonia*, o quale che fosse la sua denominazione). Dappertutto nel mondo antico mediterraneo, come del resto accade universalmente, si manifestava il rapporto, dialogante o meno, fra identità e alterità (e anche alienità). Nel quadro di questa interazione, di definizione complicatissima, si inseriscono gli innumerevoli elementi di ordine socio-culturale, politico-religioso, economico, ecc., che sono destinati a trasformare la società umana. Per poter delineare, quantomeno approssimativamente, i vari livelli di coesione e assimilazione o di squilibrio e di rottura fra le diverse componenti delle società antiche, greco-romane e altre, occorre rintracciare i confini e i margini che servono a determinare i concetti di integrazione e di emarginazione nel mondo antico. La definizione di chi appartiene a quale luogo è basilare in qualsiasi società, ma le risposte date da diverse culture, nazioni e gruppi alla questione su identità e alterità sono ineguali tra di loro e anche difficilmente commensurabili.

I contributi di questi Atti, divisi in due sezioni (Storia greca e Storia romana), hanno come scopo di studiare appunto alcune definizioni antiche dell' "otherness". Attraverso un gran numero di esempi vengono analizzati temi che illustrano i criteri di come distinguere fra diversi elementi costituenti la società antica: lingua (greca e latina), origine, cittadini e barbari, cittadini e schiavi, prigionieri e ospiti, indigeni e coloni, ecc. Naturalmente gli argomenti trattati rappresentano una scelta tra tante alternative, comunque consentono tutti al lettore di seguire il filo conduttore dell'incontro genovese.

Il volume, redatto con la consueta competenza di Maria Grazia Angeli Bertinelli e Angela Donati, si conclude con lo scritto di William Harris sulla rappresentazione dei nemici dello stato romano nella storiografia romana ('Can Enemies too Be Brave? A Question about