His position is obvious to me, but would it be for a theoretically ignorant or reluctant validate as M. does not explicate his own positions, which he proudly admits in the preface. Power over culture, ideas and thinking. He follows this theme through the work of Ferdinand sociology, and philosophers hidden in the end-notes and the bibliography. This might be possible," in sections "materialism," "demography, diet and disease" and "representation" and "practice" are evident, and a major negligence on the part of the author. Concepts, while looking very innocuous, carry around a heavy bit of theoretical 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 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.

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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.

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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".

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La prominenza di temi di ricerca tradizionali, l'accento sulle modelle di pensiero dei settori scientifici e la mancanza di temi centralizzati di questi interventi e modelli con la mancanza di grandi proponenti di storia storica dal secondo decennio rendono questo libro un'intrada introduttiva alla storia storica che sembra molto sociale. Sarei timorato di proporre questo libro come una introduzione alla storia storica per uno studente, anche se è ben scritto. Ma come M. stesso afferma, questi sono questioni personali, indipendentemente della generosità che conduce il termine virtus per gli avversari.

Mika Kajava


This collection presents the papers (and some abstracts) of the 7. Internationales Kolloquium zur historischen Geographie des Altertums that took place in Stuttgart on the 9th to the 9th of May 1999. The papers are not in any easily discernible order, and at the first glimpse, the reader is left with the desire that some kind of internal division would have been made. The editors defend this (p. 7) by referring to the wide thematic variety of the contributions and the wish to conserve this variety in the apparent disorder of the volume; the reader is bound to agree at the end, although some thematic groupings can made out.

A number of papers concentrate on studying single routes, ranging in scale from pieces of road (Schmalz), to routes in a single geographical setting (Herzig), to a presentation of the complete cultural and social context of a well-known road (Davero Rocchi). Of these, Herzig's is also of interest in relation to the status of roads in the northern Roman provinces in general, while Davero Rocchi's study of the political and status context of the hiera hodos leading from Athens to the sanctuary at Delphi is interesting and well done; the ideas are familiar but their application in this setting is novel.

On the technical aspects of road construction, one paper discusses the general use of bridges in the ancient world (Briegel) and another deals specifically with the uses of bridges and fords on Mycenaean roads in the Argolis region (Knau). Knau presents an interesting interpretation of the uses of these two structures; it seems that fords were often used to cross larger rivers where bridges could not be built with the techniques available.

Three papers study the interaction of local and large scale traffic networks, in the Bay of Corinth (Freitag), the central Ionian Isles (Wirbelauer) and around Gadara, modern northwestern Jordan (Bührl/Riedel, vs. Bührl/Riedel in the Table of Contents). These all provide insights in how the routes were simultaneously used for local and long distance travel. Other papers with similar approaches study the roads and footpaths in Attica and Megaris (Lohmann) and the road network in ancient Cilicia (Sayar). More weight is placed on the institutions of trade and traffic in the papers on the juridical definition of viae publicae in the context of the roads in Gallia and Germania (Rathmann), and the trade connections between the Pontos region and the Aegean (von Bredow).

Three papers are connected with long-distance trade to the east. Cataudella examines the waterways connecting the Mediterranean with Persia, Bianchetti the sea routes to India in Hellenistic and Roman periods, and Ruffing the routes used by Roman long-distance trade to the east, mainly with India and China. These papers form a most interesting combinations, since together they show well that the route used in this trade certainly was not a function of "cost," but was selected based on a much more complex process which included the existing infrastructure, political situation, the need for security and the types of goods.