

A striking omission is an almost complete lack of any environmental history. Sallares' chapter on the ecology of the Mediterranean informs the reader very well about the varied and variable climate of the Mediterranean region, the physical environment, the risks and hazards of the environment, and the endemic diseases affecting ancient populations. What seems to be lacking, however, is a general framework for the history of the region, meaning a description of the temporal changes in the environment affecting human populations over time. For example, the chapters by John Bennet and Ian Morris on the Aegean Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Greece (respectively) would greatly benefit from a more environmentally conscious approach, both internally and externally. The book does not provide any "big picture" of environmental and climate change to which the development described in these chapters could relate, although environmental factors are hinted at as possible causes in both chapters.

Mostly these criticisms are just differences in point of view, and should be taken as such, except perhaps for the lack of the environmental approach. They reflect more perhaps the way in which economic matters are seen in relation to other "parts" of the past. In the case of this book the economy is often given a position where it reacts to "hard" things, like disasters, wars and conquests, and in its turn, affects, also occasionally determines, the "soft" things, society, culture and so on. This perhaps explains why after reading many of the contributions, while learning so much more of the ancients' world, I still could not fathom any better why they did what they did and thought the way they thought. In this study, the ancient world is explained to us in words and concepts that make it understandable to us, but how the ancients understood their world and conceptualized their actions is still pretty much left in the dark.

After all the merits this book has, one is still tempted to conclude that it is a monumental achievement vividly demonstrating, why economic matters are 1) too complicated; 2) too important; and 3) too interesting to be left only to the economists.

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TAKESHI AMEMIYA: *Economy and Economics of Ancient Greece*. Routledge Explorations in Economic History, 33. Routledge, London – New York 2007. ISBN 978-0-415-70154-9. XXIV, 184 pp. GBP 70.

The author of this book, Takeshi Amemiya, is an econometrician of some renown, and one could say that this shows in the book. This relatively thin book, which appeared in a series of Economic history, is very unlike most of the other books on the same subject the reviewer has encountered before. It is divided into three main parts: 1. History, society, culture; 2. Economy; 3. Economics.

In the first part, A. provides the reader with "background" material: the part contains chapters on the history (chap. 1) and society and culture (chap. 2) of Athens, as well as a chapter dedicated to the particularities of the Athenian democracy (chap. 3), with a concluding chapter about the successfulness of the Athenian democracy (chap. 4). One can hardly call these chapters works of history, as they look and perform better as thematically organized collections of data. In the chapter on history, for example, the "Classical Age" and

the "Hellenistic Age" are presented as chronicles of important happenings, and appear as lists of years. The good thing is that this data is actually relevant to the discussions that appear later in the book. In the chapter on society and culture, A., with his dry and matter-of-fact style, describes some of the most relevant phenomena of Athenian society, and the Athenian democracy is described in the same vein. As to the chapter on the success of the Athenian democracy, I can hardly find any real assessment of this as A. omits to discuss what he actually means by "success". It seems to be defined by certain general assumptions of things that are generally assumed to be morally correct by a majority of westerners today, and the "success" is then measured by the number of decisions in accord with and in contrast to these values made by the Athenian assembly.

The second part of the book is without doubt the most interesting. There are two main reasons for this: first, the author has meticulously collected a large amount of references to various forms of economic activity taking place at Athens during the classical period. Probably none of these are new or previously unknown, but A's very concise style makes the catalogue of economic practices actually surprisingly interesting. Second, after a descriptive listing of various practices, the author suddenly starts to build a mathematical model of the Athenian slave imports, forcing the reader to reassess the probability and possibility of some earlier conclusions and estimates of the amounts of slaves needed in Athens. Moreover, A. prepares a model for the whole Athenian economy, getting in the end a resulting GDP of 4,430 talents.

In the third part of the book, A. analyses texts from Xenophon, Plato and Aristotle for any descriptions of the economy, especially from the moral point of view. What is good action? What is good governance? How is the economy good and bad? The third part of the book seems actually to be aimed against utilitarianism as an economic philosophy. A. speaks strongly against "utility maximization" as the principal concept in the analysis of human behaviour, so this part of the book finds its context more in the field of economics than within the classical studies. (Except perhaps for the "Well I've always known that" reaction, that most classicists perhaps might have when reading these pages.)

This book looks and feels like a set of lecture notes. It is structured exactly like what one would expect from a lecture, and even the writing style well suits oral expression, where the text is just used to support the teacher, who then formulates and explicates the ideas in his own words.

An economist trying to widen his historical vision might well find this book charming, and anyone working with the Athenian economy should probably have a look at it. The extremely bare and concise style is a welcome change from the often very elaborate narratives of the more traditional histories, and well reflects the starting point of this kind of economic approach: some things just are as they are, and are not difficult to be described as such.

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