

## Economy and Society in the Ancient World

CLAS 12331/22331; 20 credits; TB1, 2009-10

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How similar was the ancient world to our own? This question lies at the heart of all discussions of ancient economy and society; it gives them a significance that goes beyond the apparently straightforward questions of how the ancients produced, distributed and consumed food and other goods, and how they organised their society. The 'material base' of the economy not only supported 'classical civilisation', it shaped it and set limits on its development. We shall make use of traditional literary sources, archaeology, comparative evidence from other pre-industrial societies and modern theories, with the aim of understanding not only how the ancient economy and society were structured but also how this might affect our views of the ancient world and how to study it, and even our views of our own society.

On successful completion of this unit, you should:

- be familiar with key issues in the study of the economy and society of the ancient world, and the way that the interpretation of the ancient world has been shaped by wider modern debates about economic and social development.
- have had some experience of studying key pieces of evidence (literary and archaeological). You should be aware of their relevance to different topics, and should be able to develop your own interpretations of the evidence in relation to the themes studied in the unit.
- be able to use the knowledge acquired in lectures and through your own researches to construct coherent, relevant and persuasive arguments on different topics. These arguments should be informed by a range of different evidence.
- have had the opportunity to develop your skills in oral and written communication, in small groups and general discussion, and in essays and written exams.

**Teaching** There will be two classes each week, on Tuesdays at 9.00 and Fridays at 12.10, both in Lecture Room 8. These classes will be largely lecture-based, but will also involve small-group work to discuss particular issues and pieces of ancient evidence. You are expected to prepare for each class by reading around the subject; this handout shows suggested introductory reading for each topic, as well as more general works with which you should become familiar.

**Web Resources** Information about this unit, including copies of Powerpoint slides, will be posted on *Blackboard*, Bristol's Online Learning Environment: log in using your UoB username and password at [www.ole.bris.ac.uk](http://www.ole.bris.ac.uk) and search for the course 'Economy and Society'. You should have been registered automatically; if not, please contact me by e-mail.

**Contact** My tutorial time this Teaching Block is Tuesday, 3.00-4.00; my room is 1.36, on the first floor in 11 Woodland Road. If you can't manage this time, or need to get in touch with me urgently, the best method is e-mail: [n.d.g.morley@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:n.d.g.morley@bristol.ac.uk).

**Assessment and Feedback** This unit is assessed by an essay, of c. 2,000 words for first years and c. 2,500 words for second years, due in on **3<sup>rd</sup> December**, and a 90-minute exam in the summer term. In the exam, you will be required to answer two essay questions from a choice of eight. For the essay, choose one of the following titles, and make use of the introductory bibliographies for different topics to identify relevant introductory reading. You should then use the bibliographies in these works, and your other skills in finding relevant material (e.g. searching for articles in journals) to find further information. Note that many of these essay titles are deliberately designed so that they can be answered from a variety of perspectives; you are not expected to cover every possible aspect of the topic but should focus your answer, depending on

your particular interests. You should wherever possible make reference to the ancient evidence and its interpretation, rather than simply summarising the views of modern historians.

Was the ancient world underdeveloped?

‘Ancient mentality was acquisitive, not productive’: discuss.

Why was there no ancient industrial revolution?

How important was trade and exchange in the ancient world?

[‘For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil’ \(1 Timothy 6:10\): is this an accurate reflection of ancient attitudes towards money? Discuss with reference to Greece, Rome or the Judeo-Christian tradition.](#)

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How far was the development of ancient society shaped and limited by its environment?

‘The first class antithesis which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamian marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male’ (Frederick Engels): discuss.

Was the development of ancient society unsustainable without slavery?

‘We cannot begin to understand the ancient economy without some idea of how many people there were’: discuss.

Does it make sense to talk about the ‘ancient’ economy?

**Essential Reading** The following books are strongly recommended as introductions to the period and to the various issues involved in studying it; they offer quite different perspectives, so that even the older ones like Finley remain well worth reading (while bearing in mind that they will be dated in some respects). You are strongly advised to buy at least a couple of these — all available in paperback — and to read most of the others in the course of this unit.

M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 1999)

P. Garnsey & R. Saller, *The Roman Empire: economy, society, culture* (1987)

K. Greene, *The Archaeology of the Roman Economy* (1986)

P. Horden & N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: a study of Mediterranean History* (2000)

N. Morley, *Trade in Classical Antiquity* (2007)

**Essential Reference** The following collections of articles are generally too expensive and miscellaneous to be recommended purchases, unless you are especially keen on this subject, but are highly recommended as sources of the latest thinking on different topics.

P. Cartledge, E.E. Cohen & L. Foxhall, eds., *Money, Labour and Land* (2002)

J. Manning & I. Morris, eds., *The Ancient Economy: evidence and models* (2005)

W. Scheidel, I. Morris & R. Saller, eds., *Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (2007)

W. Scheidel & S. Von Reden, eds., *The Ancient Economy* (2002)

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**Key Sources** We will be referring to these texts regularly, as they relate to a range of different topics within the unit. You should aim to read them through as soon as possible, to familiarise yourself with them; you will be asked to read specific passages in advance for particular classes. Older translations are available online at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/collections>; for Xenophon, you would be well advised to get hold of a copy of the far superior modern edition, [both because it’s a better translation and because of the useful introduction by the editor.](#)

Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* (edited by S. Pomeroy, 1994)

Cato and Varro, *De Re Rustica* (trans. W. D. Hooper & H. B. Ash, 1934).

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## (1) Economy and Society

[G.M. Hodgson, \*How Economics Forgot History\* \(2001\)](#)

[R.J. Holton, \*Economy and Society\* \(1992\)](#)

[N. Morley, \*Theories, Models and Concepts in Ancient History\* \(2004\), chapter 2](#)

[N. Morley, 'Economic & social history', in A. Erskine, ed., \*A Companion to Ancient History\* \(2009\)](#)

[K. Polanyi, \*Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies\* \(1968\)](#)

[M. Sahlins, \*Stone Age Economics\* \(1974\)](#)

## (2) Energy

[P. Crone, \*Pre-Industrial Societies\* \(1989\)](#)

[E. A. Wrigley, \*Continuity, Chance and Change\* \(1988\), Chapters 1-2.](#)

## (3) Environment

[F. Braudel, \*The Structures of Everyday Life: the limits of the possible\* \(1981\)](#)

[F. Braudel, 'History and the social sciences: the \*longue durée\*', in \*On History\* \(1980\)](#)

[J.D. Hughes, \*Pan's Travail: environmental problems of the ancient Greeks and Romans\* \(1994\)](#)

[R. Sallares, \*The Ecology of the Ancient Greek World\* \(1991\)](#)

[G. Shipley & J. Salmon, eds., \*Human Landscapes in Classical Antiquity\* \(1996\)](#)

**IMPORTANT NOTE: no class on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October**

## (4) Technology

[G. Basalla, \*The Evolution of Technology\* \(1988\)](#)

[S. Cuomo, \*Technology and Culture in Greek and Roman Antiquity\* \(2007\)](#)

[K. Greene, 'Technology and innovation in context', \*Journal of Roman Archaeology\* 7 \(1994\)](#)

[J.W. Humphrey, J.P. Oleson & A.N. Sherwood, eds., \*Greek and Roman Technology\* \(1998\)](#)

[A. Wilson, 'Machines, power and the ancient economy', \*Journal of Roman Studies\* 92 \(2002\)](#)

## (5) Demography and Disease

[R.S. Bagnall, 'The effects of plague: model and evidence', \*Journal of Roman Archaeology\* 15 \(2002\)](#)

[H. King, ed., \*Health in Antiquity\* \(2005\)](#)

[N. Morley, 'The transformation of Roman Italy', \*Journal of Roman Studies\* 91 \(2001\)](#)

[T. Parkin, \*Demography and Roman Society\* \(1992\)](#)

[W. Scheidel, 'The Greek demographic expansion', \*Journal of Hellenic Studies\* 123 \(2003\)](#)

## (6) Family and Gender

[S. Dixon, \*The Roman Family\* \(1992\)](#)

[S. C. Humphreys, \*The Family, Women and Death\* \(1983\)](#)

[T.G. Parkin, \*Old Age in the Roman World\* \(2003\)](#)

[C.B. Patterson, \*The Family in Greek History\* \(1998\)](#)

[R. Saller, \*Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family\* \(1994\)](#)

## (7) Class and Status

[G. E. M. de Ste Croix, \*The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World\* \(1981\)](#)

[N. Morley, 'Social structure and demography', in N. Rosenstein & R. Morstein-Marx, eds., \*A Companion to the Roman Republic\* \(2006\)](#)

[E.M. Wood, \*Democracy against Capitalism\* \(1995\)](#)

## (8) Patronage and Social Relations

[A. Fuks, \*Social Conflict in Ancient Greece\* \(1984\)](#)

[F. Millar, \*The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic\* \(1998\)](#)

[R. Saller, \*Personal Patronage under the Early Empire\* \(1982\)](#)

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N. Morley, 'Economic & social history', in A. Erskine, ed., *A Companion to Ancient History* (2009)¶

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[P. Veyne, \*Bread and Circuses\* \(1990\)](#)  
[A. Wallace-Hadrill, ed., \*Patronage in Ancient Society\* \(1989\)](#)

#### **(9) Slavery**

[K. R. Bradley, \*Slavery and Society at Rome\* \(1994\)](#)  
[N. R. E. Fisher, \*Slavery in Classical Greece\* \(1993\)](#)  
[M. I. Finley, \*Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology\* \(1980\)](#)  
[P. Garnsey, \*Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine\* \(1996\)](#)  
[K. Hopkins, \*Conquerors and Slaves\* \(1978\), Chapter 1](#)  
[E. M. Wood, \*Peasant-Citizen and Slave\* \(1988\)](#)

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#### **(10) Poverty and Wealth**

[M. Atkins & R. Osborne, eds., \*Poverty in the Roman World\* \(2006\)](#)  
[P. Brown, \*Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire\* \(2002\)](#)  
[P. Garnsey, \*Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World\* \(1988\)](#)  
[P. Garnsey, \*Food and Society in Classical Antiquity\* \(1999\)](#)

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#### **(11) Agriculture**

[L. Foxhall, \*Olive Cultivation in Ancient Greece\* \(2007\)](#)  
[J.M. Frayn, \*Subsistence Farming in Roman Italy\* \(1979\)](#)  
[T.W. Gallant, \*Risk and Survival in Ancient Greece\* \(1991\)](#)  
[S. Isager & J. E. Skydsgaard, \*Ancient Greek Agriculture\* \(1992\)](#)  
[N. Morley, \*Metropolis and Hinterland: the city of Rome and the Italian economy\* \(1996\)](#)

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#### **(12) Trade**

[P. Garnsey, K. Hopkins & C. R. Whittaker, eds., \*Trade in the Ancient Economy\* \(1983\)](#)  
[H. Parkins & C. Smith, eds., \*Trade, Traders and the Ancient City\* \(1998\)](#)  
[S. von Reden, \*Exchange in Ancient Greece\* \(1995\)](#)  
[C.M. Reed, \*Maritime Traders in the Ancient Greek World\* \(2003\)](#)  
[D.W. Tandy, \*Warriors into Traders\* \(1997\)](#)  
[G.K. Young, \*Rome's Eastern Trade\* \(2001\)](#)

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#### **(13) Consumption and Production**

[A. Appadurai, ed., \*The Social Life of Things\* \(1986\)](#)  
[C.J. Berry, \*The Idea of Luxury\* \(1993\)](#)  
[D.J. Mattingly & J. Salmon, eds., \*Economies Beyond Agriculture in the Classical World\* \(2001\)](#)

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#### **(14) Urbanisation**

[P. Abrams & E.A. Wrigley, eds., \*Towns in Societies\* \(1978\)](#)  
[R.J. Holton, \*Cities, Capitalism and Civilization\* \(1986\)](#)  
[N. Morley, 'Urbanisation and development in Italy', available on \*Blackboard\*](#)  
[G. Woolf, \*Becoming Roman\* \(1997\), chapter 5.](#)

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#### **(15) Money**

[R.P. Duncan-Jones, \*Money and Government in the Roman Empire\* \(1994\)](#)  
[W.V. Harris, ed., \*The Monetary Systems of the Greeks and Romans\* \(2008\)](#)  
[C. Howgego, \*Ancient History from Coins\* \(1995\)](#)  
[E. Lo Cascio in C.E. King, ed., \*Coin Finds and Coin Use in the Roman World\* \(1993\)](#)  
[R. Seaford, \*Money and the Early Greek Mind\* \(2004\)](#)

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#### **(16) Markets**

[P. Bang, \*The Roman Bazaar\* \(2008\)](#)

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