CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

IAN MORRIS, RICHARD P. SALLER AND WALTER SCHEIDEL

We have two goals in this book: to summarize the state of knowledge in ancient Greek and Roman economic history, and to contribute to shaping future research. The book is the first of its kind. The original *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* began with the decline of the Roman empire; and in the seventy years since its first volume appeared there has been no single-volume overview of Greco-Roman economic history to complement it. From one perspective, that is hardly surprising. Most ancient historians rely on literary sources produced by and for a leisured elite. These say notoriously little about economics, and the corpus of texts has barely expanded since the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* was published. But experts in the field know that this perspective is misleading. The publication of huge numbers of inscriptions, papyri, coins, and mute archaeological data has transformed scholarship in the last two generations, and Greco-Roman economic historians are now asking new questions and using new methods to answer them. But their advances are as yet barely known outside the specialist community. We hope that this *Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* will simultaneously help students of classical culture understand the material forces that made the Greeks' and Romans' cultural achievements possible and allow economic historians of other times and places to fit the Greco-Roman experience into the broader sweep of world economic history.

Douglass North, a Nobel laureate in economics, began his influential book *Structure and Change in Economic History* by explaining that

> I take it as the task of economic history to explain the structure and performance of economies through time. By "performance" I have in mind the typical concerns of economists – for example, how much is produced, the distribution of costs and benefits, or the stability of production. The primary emphasis in explaining production is on total output, output per capita, and the distribution of income of the society. By "structure" I mean those characteristics of a society which we believe to be the basic determinants of performance. Here I include the political and economic institutions, technology, demography, and ideology of a society.

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"Through time" means that economic history should explain temporal changes in structure and performance. Finally, "explanation" means explicit theorizing and the potential of refutability.[1]

Greco-Roman economic historians have not always thought about their field in this way. When serious modern debate began in Germany in the 1890s, it focused almost exclusively on performance. Some scholars (nowadays usually called "primitivists") suggested that closed, self-sufficient households characterized Greece and Rome. This small-scale economy only yielded to larger city-level economies in the Middle Ages, and to national economies and large-scale trade in the sixteenth century. Other historians, the "modernists," insisted to the contrary that ancient economies were like those of early-modern Europe, and performed at a similar level.[2] According to Eduard Meyer, the leading modernist, "in the history of Greece, the seventh and sixth centuries BC correspond to the fourteenth and fifteenth in the modern world, the fifth corresponds to the sixteenth."[3]

While this debate was still raging, Max Weber suggested that locating the Greco-Roman economy's performance along a primitive-to-modern scale mattered less than understanding the economy's structure, above all how ideas about social status determined the production, circulation, and consumption of goods.[4] But few professional ancient historians paid attention to Weber's sociological observations, and by the First World War classicists had formed a rough consensus in favor of modernism. The best work, like Mikhail Rostovtzeff's magisterial surveys of Hellenistic and Roman history, combined a broad emphasis on how markets made possible a sophisticated urban civilization with awareness of the discontinuities of those same markets and the extreme poverty of the mass of peasants.[5]

Between the 1950s and the 1970s, the limitations of this focus on performance became increasingly clear, particularly to a group of ancient historians at Cambridge University, where A. H. M. Jones and Moses Finley successively held the chair of ancient history. Finley had taken part in Karl Polanyi's famous seminar on economic institutions in New York, where Polanyi developed his substantivist economics.[6] Polanyi argued that there were three mechanisms through which goods could circulate: reciprocity, redistribution, and markets. Only in market economies, Polanyi suggested, did individuals interact as disembedded social actors interested only in gain. In systems of reciprocity and redistribution, economics was always embedded in other social institutions. Polanyi believed that in the 330s BC Athens had been on the verge of becoming a market economy, but that the first true market economy only developed in England

[1] North 1981: 3. [2] Finley 1979a collects the major texts.
[3] Cited from Austin and Vidal-Naquet 1977: 5. [4] Particularly Weber 1891; 1909.
[5] Rostovtzeff 1941; 1953; with Saller 2002: 251–7. [6] Polanyi et al. 1957.

around AD 1800. Finley disagreed with many of Polanyi's interpretations,[7] but substantivism deeply influenced his approach to Greco-Roman economics.

Dismissing the mid-twentieth-century modernist consensus as "a schoolboy version of Adam Smith,"[8] Finley relentlessly emphasized structure over performance. In *The Ancient Economy* he argued that in Greece and Rome between 1000 BC and AD 500, concern for citizen status determined the forms of economic activity: "the citizen-élite were not prepared, *in sufficient numbers*, to carry on those branches of the economy without which neither they nor their communities could live at the level to which they were accustomed . . . They lacked the will; that is to say, they were inhibited, as a group (whatever the responses of a minority), by over-riding values." To Finley, making sense of the ancient economy meant understanding its value system, and consequently "The economic language and concepts we are all familiar with, even the laymen among us, the 'principles', whether they are Alfred Marshall's or Paul Samuelson's, the models we employ, tend to draw us into a false account."[9]

As Finley saw it, concern for citizen status acted as a brake on the development of markets in land, labor, and capital, and therefore on technology and trade. This severely limited the ability of the rich to buy the labor of their poorer fellow citizens, forcing them to alienate exploitation outside the citizen community, above all onto chattel slaves. The bonds of egalitarian male citizenship made even profitable practices like lending, trade, and financial services seem morally dubious. According to the literary texts they wrote, classical Athenian citizens relegated these activities to the margins of legitimate society, where foreigners, women, freedmen, and slaves dominated them, and in Republican Rome senators generally left them to equestrians. Living off rents was idealized as morally superior to market activity: Greek and Roman cities were consumer cities, exploiting the countryside through tax, tribute, and rent rather than by selling urban goods to rural consumers. War and imperialism rather than trade policies dominated states' pursuit of revenues.

Finley transformed our understanding of ancient economic structures. In the 1980s and 1990s many historians followed his lead, debating whether the consumer-city model best described ancient urbanism, whether Roman farmers were economically rational, whether Aristotle understood how markets worked, etc. Finley focused attention on economic sociology, locating production, distribution, and consumption within larger networks of power. He never specified what such a degree of economic embeddedness meant for performance, which was not prominent in his accounts; but

[7] E.g., Finley 1970. [8] Finley 1965a: 12.
[9] Finley 1973a: 60, 23, with further discussion in Morris 1999.

a decade after *The Ancient Economy* came out, Keith Hopkins – Finley's successor as Professor of Ancient History at Cambridge – suggested that

> The new orthodoxy [of Jones and Finley] stresses the cellular self-sufficiency of the ancient economy; each farm, each district, each region grew and made nearly all that it needed. The main basis of wealth was agriculture. The vast majority of the population in most areas of the ancient world was primarily occupied with growing food. To be sure, there were exceptions (such as classical Athens and the city of Rome), but they were exceptions and should be treated as such. Most small towns were the residence of local large-landowners, centres of government and of religious cult; they also provided market-places for the exchange of local produce and a convenient location for local craftsmen making goods predominantly for local consumption. The scale of inter-regional trade was very small. Overland transport was too expensive, except for the cartage of luxury goods. And even by sea, trade constituted only a very small proportion of gross product. That was partly because each region of the Mediterranean basin had a roughly similar climate and so grew similar crops. The low level of long-distance trade was also due to the fact that neither economies of scale nor investment in productive techniques ever reduced unit production costs sufficiently to compensate for high transport costs. Therefore no region or town could specialize in the manufacture of cheaper goods; it could export only prestige goods, even overseas. And finally, the market for such prestige goods was necessarily limited by the poverty of most city-dwellers and peasants.[10]

In the 1970s this was, Hopkins concluded, "by far the best model available. It provide[d] a matrix of coherent proposals about the structure, character and operation of the ancient economy." But Hopkins also noted that "The price we must pay for having a single model cover [the Greco-Roman world from 1000 BC through AD 500] is that it may appear too uniform, almost static in composition." Hopkins proposed "an elaboration of the Finley model," which would "accommodate modest economic growth and subsequent decline." In Hopkins' view, "the size of the surplus produced in the Mediterranean basin during the last millennium BC and the first two centuries AD gradually increased . . . The growth in the surplus produced and extracted was largely the result of two factors, political change and the spread of technical and social innovations."[11] He broke this proposition down into seven clauses:

> First, total agricultural production rose during classical antiquity, as more land in the Graeco-Roman world as a whole was brought under arable cultivation . . . Secondly, the population of the Roman world in the first and second centuries AD was greater than the population of the same area (a) 1,000 years earlier and (b) 500 years later. Thirdly, the proportion of the total population engaged in non-agricultural production and services increased . . . Fourth, because of the increased division

[10] Hopkins 1983b: xi–xii. [11] Hopkins 1983b: xiv.

of labour, total non-agricultural product rose . . . Fifth, average productivity per capita, the average amount produced by each person engaged in agriculture and in non-agricultural production, rose . . . sixth . . . (a) the total amount and (b) the proportion of total production extracted from primary producers in taxes and rent increased . . . Finally, the seventh clause. In the first and second centuries AD the Roman state exacted a large amount of taxes in money and then spent them, predominantly along the frontiers where the armies were stationed and in the city of Rome where the emperor normally kept Court. The expenditure of taxes (and similarly of money rents paid to absentee landlords) at some distance from where they were raised stimulated a large volume of long-distance trade, as tax-payers secured money with which to pay taxes in successive years by the sale of produce.[12]

Developing Hopkins' arguments, Richard Saller has suggested that per capita economic growth averaged around 0.1 percent per annum in the western Roman empire between 200 BC and AD 100, raising per capita consumption 25 percent or more higher than it had been before 200 BC – trivial by modern standards, which anticipate economic growth two orders of magnitude higher; but surely a tremendous boon for people who experienced it.[13]

Since the 1980s Roman historians have put economic performance back at center stage, although Hellenists still focus more on structure.[14] It might be naïve to assume that this intellectual history has been driven solely by internal forces, with better theories driving out worse ones as evidence improved and scholars engaged in searching mutual critiques. After all, the ancient economy first emerged as an academic issue, focusing on performance, at the height of the so-called "first globalization" in the generation before World War I. International trade and industrial output were booming, and (though we are not aware of any statements to this effect by the participants in the primitivist-modernist controversy) this historical context may well have made economic performance an obvious and important issue for classical scholars to address. The shift toward structure and what Hopkins called the "cellular self-sufficiency" model took place against the background of mid-twentieth-century barriers to international movements of capital, goods, and people, growing statism, and increasing concern over market failures and redistributive welfare economies; and the swing of interest back toward performance and markets coincides with the "second globalization" since the 1980s.[15]

Each generation gets the ancient history it deserves. But it would also be naïve to reduce the 115 years of debates to mere reflections of underlying socioeconomic forces. The changing world we live in surely makes certain questions about the past seem more interesting than others, and may direct

[12] Hopkins 1983b: xv–xx, and more fully in Hopkins 1980.
[13] Saller 2002: 257–67.
[14] See discussion in Morris 1994b.
[15] Cf. Morris 2003.

our attention to bodies of evidence that previous generations of scholars have overlooked; but it does not shape the data themselves, or the logic of our methods. If contemporary developments got some Roman historians interested in economic growth in the late 1970s, their questions won support because they drew attention to the fact that Rome's emergence as a supercity in the last centuries BC must have transformed the Mediterranean into a network to feed it. No plausible margin of error in estimates of Rome's population could get around this. The static cellular model had diverted attention away from the transformation, but when Romanists faced the numbers, they had to conclude that the economy expanded. Subsequent research produced evidence for the processes involved.[16] Greek history had no single motor like Rome's size to compel scholars to focus on growth, which may explain why performance remained a minority interest through the 1990s.[17] But the example of the Romanists' work fueled the search for evidence, and it now seems that first-millennium BC Greece also experienced sustained increases in per capita consumption, averaging perhaps 0.05–0.1 percent per annum between 800 and 300 BC.[18] The accumulating evidence for changing performance has also required new theories linking Greco-Roman demography, urbanization, and real wages in a single pattern.[19]

The new focus on performance necessarily raises new questions. The ancient economy did not just support a small elite in luxury; it raised living standards well above subsistence level for tens of millions of peasants and city-dwellers. People lived longer, ate better, occupied more comfortable homes, and enjoyed more numerous, more varied, and higher quality goods than their prehistoric forebears or early mediaeval successors. Yet they never came close to the post-mediaeval breakthrough to capitalism, industrialization, and world domination. Why?

Since the 1980s modern economic historians have moved toward increasingly complex models of the industrial revolution, recognizing that even before they unleashed the power of fossil fuels, early modern "advanced organic economies" (E. A. Wrigley's term) made major gains in performance.[20] Other scholars have identified a series of premodern economic efflorescences in Eurasia, in which both aggregate and per capita consumption rose slowly for centuries, only eventually to stagnate and decline.[21] These efflorescences may hold the key to explaining northwest Europe's economic takeoff in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by allowing historians to identify which variables were present in early modern England but absent in Song China, Athens, or Rome. However, there is as

[16] See Hitchner 2005, with references.
[17] Important exceptions include Cohen 1992 and Bresson 2000.
[18] Morris 2004; 2005. [19] Scheidel 2004b, and Chapter 3 below.
[20] See particularly Wrigley 1988; 2000; de Vries and van der Woude 1997.
[21] See Jones 2000; Goldstone 2000; 2002.

yet no agreement on what these variables were. Some historians see long-term demographic differences between northwest Europe and Asia going back to the Middle Ages, giving western Europe a decisive edge;[22] others argue that European institutions and political fragmentation, again going back to the Middle Ages, made the difference;[23] while others still suggest that northwest Europe in most respects lagged behind other advanced organic economies – particularly China – until exploitation of the New World transformed the scale of the system.[24]

The cultural achievements of classical Mediterranean civilization rested on a remarkable economic efflorescence. We see the main challenges facing Greco-Roman economic historians in the early twenty-first century as being (i) to find ways to document performance more accurately; (ii) to build on twentieth-century advances in understanding institutions and ideology by clarifying the relationships between structures and performance; and (iii) to pursue comparative analyses of why the Greco-Roman economy broke down. The first challenge calls for more systematic analysis, particularly of archaeological evidence. It will never be easy to use coarse-grained archaeological data to chart slow average growth rates (perhaps just .05–.1 percent per annum) that probably involved large fluctuations, and the results will probably be controversial; but a long-term approach, allowing time for tiny increments to compound into measurable change, may provide a way forward. The second challenge, we suggest, requires ancient historians to continue Finley's and Hopkins' engagements with the social sciences. Finley changed the field's direction by developing Weberian concepts, and Hopkins built a broadly Keynesian macroeconomic general equilibrium model of the Roman Empire. Social-scientific thought of the past thirty years – particularly in development economics,[25] institutional economics,[26] human capital,[27] and economic sociology[28] – may help ancient historians develop more robust theories and methods. The third challenge may be the toughest of all, but recent work on demography, ecology, and the disease pool suggests promising avenues.[29] One of the editors' major hopes is that the *Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* will provide a solid base for thinking about these challenges.

We define our subject matter as the regions occupied by peoples identifying themselves as Greek and Roman, or ruled by these people, in the first millennium BC and the first three centuries AD. This area expanded from nuclei around the Aegean Sea and Tiber valley to encompass the entire

[22] Hajnal 1982; most recently, Hartman 2004. [23] E.g., Wallerstein 1974–89; Braudel 1981–4.
[24] E.g., Frank 1998; Wong 1998; Pomeranz 2000.
[25] Ray 1998 and Hayami 2001 provide good introductions.
[26] See North 1990; Furubotn and Richter 1998.
[27] Becker 1993. [28] Smelser and Swedberg 2005.
[29] Scheidel 2001a; 2001c; 2002; Sallares 2002; Greenberg 2003; and Chapters 2–3 below.

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Mediterranean basin, much of northwest Europe, and parts of the Middle East. This definition is conventional, but not without its problems.

Since the eighteenth century, scholars in Europe and Europe's settler colonies have tended to identify two sources of European identity: the Greco-Roman world, studied by classicists, and the Biblical world, studied by orientalists. Most scholars have seen the classical Mediterranean and Near East as having very different economic systems. Finley summed up the prevailing view in the 1970s by saying that "the Graeco-Roman world was essentially and precisely one of private ownership, whether of a few acres or of the enormous domains of Roman senators and emperors, a world of private trade, private manufacture." By contrast, "The Near Eastern economies were dominated by large palace- or temple-complexes, who owned the greater part of the arable, virtually monopolized anything that can be called 'industrial production' as well as foreign trade (which includes inter-city trade, not merely trade with foreign parts), and organized the economic, military, political and religious life of the society through a single complicated, bureaucratic, record-keeping operation for which the word 'rationing', taken very broadly, is as good a one-word description as I can think of." In consequence, "were I to define 'ancient' to embrace both worlds, there is not a single topic I could discuss without resorting to disconnected sections, employing different concepts and models."[30]

Beginning in the late 1980s, this bifurcated Mediterranean model came under sharp attack. For example, historians showed that Near Eastern and Greek citizenship had more in common than classicists and orientalists commonly assumed; that Hellenistic Egypt owed much to Saite and Persian institutions; and that the sheer variety of west Asian economic institutions defies sweeping generalizations like Finley's.[31] The stark east/west division accepted through most of the twentieth century seems overstated. But that said, there were very real differences between most of the economic systems of Egypt and the Near East, in which temples, palaces, and redistributive bureaucracies performed crucial functions,[32] and those of Greek and Roman societies, where they generally did not. It seems to us that the Greco-Roman world remains a useful analytical category,[33] and we hope that the detailed presentation of Greco-Roman economic history in this volume will facilitate more systematic comparisons with similar reviews of Egypt and the Near East.

Our definition of the Greco-Roman world is nonetheless broader than many twentieth-century versions. Chapters on the Aegean Bronze and Early Iron Ages, Persian west Asia, and the pre-Roman west Mediterranean frame

[30] Finley 1973a: 28–9. [31] Bedford 2005; Manning 2005.
[32] See general surveys in Kuhrt 1995a, Joannès 2004, and van de Mieroop 2004.
[33] See Morris and Manning 2005 for a fuller account.

the thousand years of archaic, classical, and Hellenistic Greece and Rome in the Republic and early empire. Even so, we are acutely aware of the topics this book does not cover. Staying within the confines of a single volume prevented us from including separate chapters on money, or cities, or the Phoenicians, despite their obvious importance. But we hope that the volume's positive contributions outweigh its omissions.

Part I of the book has five chapters on core analytical categories that are relevant to every chapter in the book: ecology, demography, the household, institutions, and technology. Parts II–IV describes Greek societies; parts V–VIII, Roman. We begin part II with four chapters on the background to archaic-Hellenistic Greek economic history. The first pair of chapters establishes the historical context, reviewing conditions in the Aegean in the Late Bronze (c. 1600–1200 BC) and Early Iron (c. 1200–700 BC) Ages, while the second pair provides geographical context, looking at the west Mediterranean and the western Persian empire. We devote one chapter to archaic Greece (c. 700–480 BC), and three chapters each to the fuller evidence from the classical (480–323 BC) and Hellenistic (323–30 BC) Greek worlds. The classical chapters examine production, distribution, and consumption, while each Hellenistic chapter focuses on a region in the vastly expanded Greek world (Egypt, western Asia, and the Aegean). Parts V–VII opens with two chapters on economic developments during Rome's early-middle (509–133 BC) and late (133–31 BC) Republican periods, but focuses on the early Roman empire (31 BC–AD 284). Paralleling the structure of parts III–IV, we devote one chapter each to production, distribution, and consumption, and four chapters to regional reviews of the western provinces, the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt and the frontier zones, along with one chapter on the economic role of the state. The volume closes where the original *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* opened, with a chapter looking ahead to the transformations of late antiquity.

We asked the authors of each chronological/regional chapter to address both economic performance and structure, and issues of interest to all economic historians: demography (including its bases in ecology and disease and its consequences, such as urbanization), institutions (including the structure of property rights, the nature of transaction costs, and the role of the state), and the stock of knowledge (including technology and communication and transport costs). The twenty-eight contributors bring varied perspectives to bear, reflecting differences in the evidence available for each subject as well as their wide-ranging disciplinary backgrounds. But a general picture is emerging.

The economy grew. Population is the most obvious measure. Around 800 BC, perhaps twenty million people lived around the shores of the Mediterranean. A thousand years later, there were probably forty million. Some regions – notably the Aegean and Italy – saw much more rapid

growth, and the size of the largest cities increased still more sharply. Athens probably had 40,000 residents in the 430s BC, and Syracuse perhaps twice that number in the fourth century.[34] Alexandria grew rapidly to perhaps 300,000 people in the third century BC;[35] and two hundred years later, Rome most likely had a million residents.

Changes in climate and a benign disease pool played a part in this expansion,[36] and there were improvements in agriculture (particularly the spread of increasingly intensive dry-grain farming and animal husbandry). But the main way Greeks, Romans, and other Mediterranean peoples held off positive Malthusian checks of declining living standards and starvation was through institutional change.[37] Since prehistory, interannual variability in rainfall had required communities to develop risk-buffering strategies such as fragmenting landholdings, diversifying crops, and trading surpluses. As population grew, the peoples of the ancient Mediterranean elaborated these techniques.[38]

Falling transport and communication costs allowed seaborne trade of staples (food, metals, stone) in unprecedented quantities. The rising volume of trade allowed some exploitation of comparative economic advantages around the Mediterranean, accomplished largely through private enterprise and markets. As always, we should keep this in perspective: states remained major economic actors; markets were fragmented and shallow, with high transaction costs; investment opportunities were limited; money and markets generated intense ideological conflicts; and the economy remained minuscule by modern standards – the budget of a major American private university (converted to wheat equivalent) is several times larger than that of the Roman emperors' in the first century. But despite all these caveats, in the thousand years this volume covers, goods moved around the Mediterranean more efficiently than ever before, and more efficiently than they would do again for several centuries to come. Anthropologists speak of Stone Age economics, characterized by a domestic mode of production, and Bronze Age economics, in which chiefs and kings created a political economy to finance institutions of rule.[39] The Greco-Roman world generated a distinct Iron Age economics, involving much larger movements of staples through markets, concentrations of people in cities, extensive monetization, and investment in the stock of knowledge. Puny as these developments were compared with what has happened since the eighteenth century, they were unprecedented.

Eric Jones suggests that "growth can occur only within an 'optimality band' where factor and commodity markets are freed and the government

[34] Morris 2006. [35] Scheidel 2004a. [36] Chapter 2 below.
[37] See Scheidel 2004b, and the broad theoretical framework in Wood 1998.
[38] Garnsey 1988 remains the classic study. [39] E.g., Sahlins 1972; Earle 2002.

is neither too grasping nor too weak."[40] Greek and Roman states on the whole stayed within a Jonesian optimality band, strong enough to protect property rights, but too weak to predate on their subjects so viciously that they smothered economic activity. As Weber and Finley insisted, the structures of citizenship were critically important, albeit in complicated ways. On the one hand, free male citizens controlled their own fates to a degree that few ancient societies matched. In classical Greece, the male citizens often ran their states as democracies; and even in the Roman empire, free citizens maintained strong rights against arbitrary behavior by the state or the rich. On the other hand, the ideology of egalitarian male citizenship drove many forms of economic activity to the margins of respectable society, sometimes creating a demi-monde dominated by aliens, women, and slaves; the high cost of citizen labor created strong demand for chattel slaves in some periods and places;[41] and powerful notions about gender functioned as a brake on women's ability to act outside the household (a major factor in underdevelopment in modern economies).[42]

The freedom of male citizen society also contributed to the Greeks' and Romans' extraordinary intellectual and scientific achievements, and archaeologists have recently suggested that the scale of technological innovation was higher than has been supposed.[43] Their evidence comes largely from the Roman empire, and there is no sign of the kind of social networks that forged "useful knowledge" in eighteenth-century England,[44] but again by comparison with most ancient societies, the Greco-Roman achievement was remarkable.

Most impressive of all, for a millennium the Greco-Roman world did not just hold positive Malthusian checks to population growth at bay: it actually experienced rising per capita consumption between 800 BC and AD 200. Slow as the improvements were, they lifted the standards of living of ordinary people all around the Mediterranean basin and in northwest Europe. If the typical peasant's consumption level was close to the minimum necessary for subsistence around 800 BC, by AD 200 it had risen by at least 25 percent, and probably more like 50 percent. To be sure, the gains were unevenly distributed, and the inequality of property and income distribution probably increased steadily across the period; but within every part of the Greco-Roman world, most social groups benefited to some degree.

This emerging account of the Greco-Roman economy, we believe, is an advance over twentieth-century interpretations. It improves on substantivist approaches by providing crude statistics on economic performance,

[40] Jones 2000: 187. [41] Scheidel 2005b; forthcoming, a.
[42] England and Folbre 2005; below, Chapter 4.
[43] E.g., Greene 2000; Wilson 2002. [44] Cf. Mokyr 2002.

but it also goes beyond both sides in the old primitivist-modernist debate by developing general theoretical models of ancient economic behavior and putting them in a global, comparative context. It recognizes that classical antiquity saw one of the strongest economic efflorescences in premodern history, but keeps this in perspective, refusing to confuse the ancient economy with the modern. In short, it takes seriously Douglass North's injunction to explain the structure and performance of economies through time.