

HELLENISTIC ECONOMIES

EDITED BY

ZOFIA H. ARCHIBALD, JOHN DAVIES,
VINCENT GABRIELSEN AND G. J. OLIVER



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CONTRIBUTORS

Makis Aperghis is a postgraduate student in the Department of History, University College London.

Zofia Archibald is Senior Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool.

Klaus Bringmann is Professor of Ancient History at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main.

John Davies is Rathbone Professor of Ancient History and Classical Archaeology at the University of Liverpool.

Vincent Gabrielsen is Professor of History at the University of Copenhagen.

David Gibbins is Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Liverpool.

Kenneth Kitchen is Emeritus Professor of Egyptology at the University of Liverpool.

Amos Kloner is Professor of Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Archaeology in the Department of Land of Israel Studies, Bar Ilan University.

Benedict Lowe is Tutor in Ancient History at the University of Durham.

Graham Oliver is Senior Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool.

Katerina Panagopoulou is a postgraduate student in the Department of History, University College London.

Jeremy Paterson is Senior Lecturer in Classics at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

PREFACE

The scholarly impulses underlying the Liverpool conference of June 1998, whose proceedings are reflected in this book, are set out in the Introductory Note to Part I below and need no repetition here. However, contributors and editors owe various debts of thanks which need published record, in particular to three institutions. The first is to the University of Liverpool itself, both for its financial support of the conference and for the helpfulness of staff in the conference office and at the conference venue, Derby and Rathbone Hall. The second is to the University's School of Archaeology, Classics, and Oriental Studies, of which five of the contributors to this volume are members. Notonly did we receive help and encouragement from our colleagues, especially from Professor Liz Slater as current Head of School, but the very existence of the School, with its mission to eliminate boundaries between 'European' and 'Oriental' or between philologists, historians, and archaeologists, has created a climate wherein so quintessentially interdisciplinary a subject as Hellenistic studies can flourish. However, our third debt of thanks, to the Leverhulme Trust, is in many ways the greatest, for the support it has provided to three of the editors of this volume. A Special Research Fellowship awarded by the Trust to Zofia Archibald for 1995–97 helped to support the work of which chapters 9 and 13 in this volume are a partial fruit, while the Leverhulme Research Professorship awarded to John Davies for 1995–2000 both directly provided, as nothing else could have done, the time for the work which underlies chapter 1, and indirectly sustained Graham Oliver as a colleague within the School. We hope that this title, the first book-length product of those two awards, can be seen both by the Trust and by the international scholarly community as a worthy initial return for that support.

Other debts are more immediate. We thank the publishers most warmly for their willingness to take this title on, even in the period of unwelcome stress induced by the deadlines of the British Research Assessment Exercise of 2001. In particular, we thank Jan Mitchell, our copy-editor, and John Button and his colleagues at Bookcraft Ltd for easing the transformation of a complex set of typescripts and images into tidy form. At the risk of narcissism, we also thank each other for warm personal relations and harmonious collaboration, even when hectically multitasking over long lines of communication.

*Zofia Archibald
John Davies
Vincent Gabrielsen
Graham Oliver
July 2000*

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ABBREVIATIONS

For citations both of ancient sources and of modern scholarship, the abbreviations used are largely those listed in the Third Edition of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (eds Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, Oxford, 1996), though full consistency has probably eluded collective editorial eyes. Variations therefrom, and additional abbreviations, are:

<i>AchHist</i>	<i>Achaemenid History</i>
<i>AEA</i>	<i>Archivo Español de Arqueología</i>
<i>AfO</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJN</i>	<i>American Journal of Numismatics</i>
<i>AKG</i>	<i>Archiv für Kulturgeschichte</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>ANSMN</i>	<i>American Numismatic Society: Museum Notes</i>
<i>ArNaut</i>	<i>Archaeonautica</i>
<i>BAR Int</i>	<i>British Archaeological Reports, International Series (Tempus Reparatum, Oxford)</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique</i>
<i>CAS</i>	<i>Cahiers d'Archéologie Subaquatique</i>
<i>CDAFI</i>	<i>Cahiers de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Iran</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Coin Hoards</i> (London, Royal Numismatic Society)
<i>CMA</i>	<i>Centre for Maritime Archaeology (Haifa)</i>
<i>EAE</i>	<i>Excavaciones Arqueológicas en España</i>
<i>FdD</i>	<i>Fouilles de Delphes</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IGCH</i>	M. Thompson, O. Mørkholm, and Colin M. Kraay (eds), <i>An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards</i> (American Numismatic Society, New York, 1973)
<i>IJNA</i>	<i>International Journal of Nautical Archaeology</i>
<i>INA</i>	<i>Institute of Nautical Archaeology</i>
<i>I.Priene</i>	<i>Inschriften von Priene</i> , ed. F. Hiller Freiherr von Gaertringen (Berlin, 1906)

<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JIES</i>	<i>Journal of Indo-European Studies</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>MCV</i>	<i>Mélanges de la Casa de Velásquez</i>
<i>MHA</i>	<i>Memorias de Hispania Antigua</i>
<i>NAS</i>	<i>Nautical Archaeology Society</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>Numismatic Chronicle</i>
<i>NZ</i>	<i>Numismatische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
<i>PLAV</i>	<i>Papeles del Laboratorio Arqueológico de Valencia</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des Études Anciennes</i>
<i>RSL</i>	<i>Rivista di Studi Liguri</i>
<i>SAN</i>	<i>Society for Ancient Numismatics</i>
<i>SEHHW</i>	M.I. Rostovtzeff, <i>The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World, I–III</i> (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1941): corrected impression by P.M. Fraser, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1953)
<i>SNR</i>	<i>Swiss Numismatic Review/Schweizer numismatischer Rundschau</i>
<i>TV del SIP</i>	<i>Trabajos Varios del Servicio de Investigación Prehistórica</i>
<i>WdO</i>	<i>Welt der Orient</i>
<i>ZfN</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Numismatik</i>

Part I

SETTING THE SCENE

Zofia Archibald

Why ‘Hellenistic’ and why ‘economies’? Much of the academic interest in economic issues of antiquity has been focused in recent years on the ‘archaic’ period (eighth to sixth centuries BC) or the Roman Empire. Yet the Hellenistic Age, the period conventionally beginning with the death of Alexander the Great and ending with the final and irrevocable defeat of the former kingdoms in the eastern Mediterranean at Actium, west Greece, in 31 BC, deserves serious consideration in its own right. It was in this phase that large territorial polities emerged in most parts of the eastern and many areas of the western Mediterranean; economic activity expanded perceptibly within these units and can be charted across and beyond them in various directions. The scale of such interactions is not easy to gauge but palpably increased, not just in relative terms to previous centuries but, if we are to follow the logic of political and institutional changes, by some orders of magnitude. We might expect these developments to have contributed substantially to the forms of economic activity which emerged in the early Roman Empire.

But whereas the military campaigns of kings, the explosion of civic architecture and the blooming of remarkable intellectual and artistic talents have been much to the fore of scholarly research, the economic dimension has all but imploded. Material evidence of every kind has accumulated on an enormous scale: accounts on papyri, stamped wine jar (*amphora*) handles, metallurgical debris, inscriptions recording the foundation of halls, *gymnasia* and other social amenities, as well as magnificent cult buildings. A reassessment is long overdue. Any consideration of the extra-political dimensions of this period must begin with Michael Ivanovich Rostovtzeff’s *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World (SEHHW)*, first published in 1941 and revised by Peter Fraser in 1953. It is still the starting point for anyone who seeks an in-depth account of the period and its people. But even casual acquaintance with its three fat volumes will reveal that any new assessment cannot attempt to ‘update’ Rostovtzeff. The *SEHHW* is an astonishing piece of work. Even a committee would have difficulty ‘updating’ what he achieved, amassing evidence of very varied kinds, over an enormous geographical range, and drawn from sources in at least a dozen languages. A new assessment must do more than simply accumulate data. It must have a conscious rationale.

Three of the editors of this volume, John Davies, Graham Oliver and Zofia Archibald, were all engaged on individual research programmes at Liverpool in the mid-1990s which focused on the Hellenistic period and on socio-economic matters. John Davies, as Leverhulme Professorial Fellow (1995–2000), was engaged, *inter alia*, on developing

ideas put forward in his long article for the second edition of the *CAH VII* (part 1) (Davies 1984); Graham Oliver had just completed his PhD thesis 'The Athenian State under Threat: Politics and Food Supply, 307 to 229 BC' (1995), and Zofia Archibald held a Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship (1995–7) exploring 'Interacting networks in the Hellenistic world'. These common interests contributed to the organization of an international conference in Liverpool between 25 and 28 June 1998.

The aim of the conference was to find new ways of answering the question 'What can we accept as a satisfactory analysis of the economic activities and interactions of the Hellenistic world?' This sort of question requires as broad a theoretical canvas as possible. The single most influential work of the last half century with an avowedly theoretical aim has been Moses Finley's *The Ancient Economy* (1973; second edition 1985; republished 1999). The twenty-fifth anniversary of its initial publication was marked by a plethora of colloquia. The recent proliferation of comments and critiques of Finley's work (in particular the contributions to *Opus* 6–8, 1987–9, devoted to the theme 'La cité antique? A partir de l'oeuvre de M.I. Finley'; Mattingly 1997; Parkins' introduction to Parkins and Smith 1998) has coincided with a much broader expansion of interest in socio-economic issues in antiquity. Some classicists and historians have adopted and developed Finley's 'minimalist' vision of economic interaction; others have adopted different approaches (Morris, 1994; Finley 1999, foreword, xxiii–xxxii).

Finley's ideas are addressed elsewhere in this volume (see John Davies, chapter 1 and Archibald, 'Away from Rostovtzeff', chapter 13). Since Finley ostentatiously rejected the idea of a distinctive 'Hellenistic' phase of economic activity (see Davies, chapter 1), the proposed discourse of the Liverpool Conference needed to take a broader look at what constituted economic change in the pre-Roman Mediterranean. The conference organizers proposed five issues as a starting point for discussion:

- 1 Since the term 'Hellenistic' is largely a nineteenth-century construct, driven mainly by Graeco-Macedonian political and linguistic colonialism, how appropriate is it to assume that it also denotes a specific zone of *economic* (as distinct from politico-military) interactions? By what criteria can we attempt to delimit that zone, in time and space?
- 2 Current scholarship reflects a significant tension between two paradigms. On the one hand, analyses in terms of 'core/centre and periphery' (e.g. Bilde *et al.* 1993) tend to emphasize the effects of long-distance exchange and the consequential full or partial integration of economic systems. On the other hand analyses in terms of local interaction (e.g. Reger 1994) emphasize the localness or regionality of much, if not most, economic activity. How can this tension be mediated, and by what measurements or within what broader analytic framework?
- 3 The distinction between 'economy', denoting all activities which involve the use or exchange of resource, and its subsection 'public/fiscal economy', denoting all uses of resource driven by a polity or its segments, goes back at least to August Boeckh's *Staatshaushaltung* of 1817, but tends to be overridden in practice. Granted, the difficulties of tracing the distinction within any one zone of interaction are considerable (and not only for Ptolemaic Egypt); but does it remain a valid and useful distinction, at least in theory? Indeed, given the economic importance of royal courts and palaces, and the impact of royal exactions and *philanthropa* in redistributing resources, should the distinction be used more widely and explicitly? How can the

economic roles of temples and sanctuaries in attracting and redistributing resources be reconciled with any distinction between public and private?

- 4 Certain processes which unfolded continuously through the entire Hellenistic period, had significant economic impact: city foundations, monetization, population *diasporas*, shifts in public and private investment patterns, as well as many others. Can their impact be evaluated in such a way as to be representable in a process model? How does their impact affect our ability to treat 'the Hellenistic world' as a stable entity in any sense?
- 5 Economic analysis is about tracing the patterns of flow of resource within a given land/seascape and within a given technological environment, and about accounting for them in terms of effective demands and motivations. How do we integrate local flows with longer-distance flows, and how do we make motivations a recognizable component of any models we construct?

These five reflections have been variously addressed by the contributors to this volume (comments on individual papers introduce each part). In the above list, numbers 2 and 3 explain why we have opted for the plural form, 'economies', in contrast with Finley's preference for a single 'economy'. The existence of various sub-sets into which economic activity can be empirically divided points to problems which need to be addressed independently before any comprehensive evaluation can or should be attempted.

Some issues have proved more amenable to exploration at this stage of our enquiry; others have proved harder to deal with. But we are confident that the debate about ancient economies will now begin to move in new ways. What we are presenting in this volume is a panorama of projects and themes which point in these directions. The range of topics addressed was determined by the desire, on the part of participants as well as organizers, to explore different aspects and different levels of economic behaviour. These varied glimpses are intended to stimulate theoretical ideas not just on these and related topics but on subjects which have not been examined directly.

In sketching our objectives so broadly, delineation of some important elements of the picture has inevitably been left in abeyance. The primary role of cult in ancient societies and its critical importance to the movement of goods and services, as well as the part played by sanctuaries as repositories of 'sacred' wealth, require that the 'economics of cult' be given a much larger place in the grand scheme of things (see Parts 2 and 4). The harvesting of raw materials and the production of 'commodities' – indeed, the awareness of what could be had and might be desired – are issues which deserve separate consideration. Metals had wide significance in antiquity and the specialized use of metal in coinage (and the conversion or equivalence of coinage to metalware), the process of 'monetization' and its consequences are topics which fall outside the immediate scope of our discussion, but are being addressed in a complementary forthcoming volume (K. Shipton and A. Meadows (eds) *Money and its uses in the Ancient Greek World* (Oxford)). The kinds of institutions which mirror economic functions and networking, and which contributed, in whatever manner, to these processes, are addressed by Vincent Gabrielsen with respect to Rhodian private associations, but Part 4 merely outlines these issues, and comparanda will need to be pursued in other places. Once we have a better understanding of such social networks, and of the products or services with which such networks were connected, it may become easier to address more intractable topics, such as relative scales of production and consumption. Aperghis' chapter on the Seleukid economy shows

how production and consumption were perceived from the point of view of royal tax collectors. This only tells us part of the story, of course. Even the modern Inland Revenue of the UK and its counterparts in other industrialized countries cannot be omniscient. Despite the existence of prodigious data banks, there are numerous activities that fall outside the tax statistics.

The volume begins with a magisterial survey by John Davies of what the subject of 'Hellenistic economies' denotes today. It serves two important functions at the outset of the enquiry. It outlines, with the broadest of brush strokes but with a clear eye for the requirements of detail, what we are starting with, in terms of ideas as well as research data and other resources, and what we should best focus on as manageable objectives. This survey acknowledges the limitations of what we know at present but it has high expectations of what can yet be achieved. Davies does not begin with a review of the debate on ancient economics. This has already been done elsewhere (there are convenient discussions with further bibliographies in Cartledge 1983, 1998; Morris 1994; H. Parkins and J.K. Davies in Parkins and Smith 1998). The propagation of any theoretical construct prior to an examination of the givens may confuse as much as enlighten. But we cannot begin to articulate what the subject is about unless we have some model, however sketchy, in mind. This model must accept as a given the fact that the 'Hellenistic age' is only a phase, that it was preceded by many centuries of prior activity of a related but less intense or less developed type, and that the political units we can identify had cognates among neighbours and strangers who are commonly left out of our equations, despite the sporadic recognition that the 'Mediterranean world' did not operate in a vacuum. Many of the topics and problems identified by ancient historians are also of intense interest to archaeologists studying other periods and places. The cross-fertilization from related fields has been far less in evidence for this period than for others in antiquity. Granted that inbuilt assumptions are hard to avoid, objectivity is best served by making our working assumptions as explicit as possible. Because studies of economic behaviour in antiquity have erred either on the doctrinaire (whether 'primitivist', 'substantivist' or 'modernist', consciously or otherwise), or simply evaded theoretical analysis altogether, there are clear reasons for strenuously avoiding past mistakes. However our proposed models develop, they must provide a coherent thesis; the different elements must be seen to fit consistently into a larger framework. One of the greatest weaknesses of older readings has been their lack of coherence, lack of integration, and the persistence of seemingly contradictory elements (more 'advanced' features alongside more 'primitive' ones). If this sounds somewhat mechanical, so be it. Models are mechanisms of sorts and there can be no refinement without some preliminary rough workings.

Having denied (*pace* Davies 1998) that any systematic alternatives to the 'Finleyan' vision have yet been proposed, it would be quite inaccurate to suggest that there are no steps in this direction (Davies, chapter 1). Confronting the massive *oeuvre* of Rostovtzeff, Davies outlines four possible strategies for developing a way forward:

- 1 a purely descriptive 'update' of the *SEHHW*;
- 2 a review of the data for the Hellenistic period that would both engage with the ongoing debate about ancient economies and refer not only back to Classical activities and forward to later epochs, but also include similarities to or differences from neighbouring regions of the Mediterranean, Europe and Asia;