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Cover by Kristin Parknert. Drawing from Karlsson *et al.* in this volume, p. 38, fig. 18

Carl Hampus Lyttkens, *Economic analysis of institutional change in Ancient Greece: Politics, taxation and rational behaviour* (Routledge Explorations in Economic History, 58), London & New York: Routledge 2013. xiii + 188 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-63016-0 (e-book 978-0-203-07763-4).

Prof. Lyttkens is an economist with a long-standing interest in and involvement with ancient Greece. In this book he presents an economist's view of the development of Athens' institutions and of the interplay of political and economic factors in that development.

In Ch. 1 he justifies the study of ancient Athens (it would have been better to specify Ancient Athens rather than Ancient Greece in the title of the book) and the application to it of New Institutional Economics. In his use of it this approach assumes that the tendency to maximize utility is limited by the principles of "bounded" rather than totally rational action and of "satisficing", by which when one has found a sufficiently good course of action one ceases looking for a better course; and it also allows for the fact that rational decisions frequently have unintended consequences. Lyttkens notes that differences between economic activity in the ancient world and in the modern are not as great as has sometimes been alleged, and that by the end of the Classical period in Greece market activity had developed to a significant extent. He gives a suitably cautious review of the sources for the study of ancient Greece.

Ch. 2 gives, for non-classicists, an outline of the history of Greece to 323 BC. One item which might have been included but is not is the Second Athenian League of the 4th century BC; and the concluding remark that by 323 "the independence of the Greek city-state was now effectively dead" represents a view which is increasingly being qualified or abandoned.

Ch. 3 begins Lyttkens's detailed study of institutions by focusing on the establishment of boundaries and the recognition of private property and of citizens as men entitled to own property, on competition among the élite, and on attempts to control that competition through the introduction of boards of officials with limited tenure and of written laws.

In Ch. 4 Lyttkens turns specifically to Athens, following J. Ober on the interrelation of mass and élite and stressing the trade-off between political and economic power: the rich voluntarily extended democracy in order to assure the poor that their share in the growing prosperity would not be confiscated, but the poor needed to allow the rich some power in order to secure their co-operation through the ability to prevent themselves from being subjected to punitive taxation. Cleisthenes' revolutionary change was to bring the *demos* into politics; Lyttkens follows those who believe that after the loss of the Delian League and the revenue from it Athens became less democratic in the 4th century because the rich needed to

be assured that they would not be taxed too heavily in order to make up the deficit.

Ch. 5 sees Solon as making the minimum of concessions to the *demos* to preserve the dominance of the élite, Pisistratus as breaking the power base of the other aristocrats, and Cleisthenes as seeking to get the better of Isagoras, with the move towards democracy an unintended consequence (the élite introduced changes which eventually undermined their own position). The allotment of archons in 487/6 BC (Lyttkens rejects the earlier use of allotment by Solon) was an attempt to control rivalry among the élite—but it failed: ostracisms continued and the elected generals supplanted the allotted archons as the principal officials of Athens.

In Ch. 6 Lyttkens considers taxation. Rulers need to maximize revenue in order to pay for their plans, and will prefer means of raising revenue which have low "transaction costs". One element of that is voluntary compliance as opposed to resistance; and with tax-farming, liturgies and the capital tax called *eisphora* (there is a greater willingness to pay taxes in support of wars which are considered justified) Athens achieved that, keeping the transaction costs low and the proceeds high.

In Ch. 7 Lyttkens maintains that institutional change and the development of the market economy stimulated each other. Taxation pushed people into market activity in order to acquire the money needed to pay, and pulled them into it because forms of wealth other than land were more easily concealed. Apart from its control of the grain trade Athens scored highly for "economic freedom". As market activity increased people had an increasing need to interact with those outside their immediate circle and to trust them to act rationally and honestly, but there was a strong distrust of officials and various measures were used to prevent them from becoming too powerful.

Ch. 8 concludes the book by stressing the development of market activity, the nature of short-term changes with unintended longer-term consequences (Lyttkens frequently quotes the judgment of J.K. Davies that commonly changes were made not in order to implement some ideal but in order to prevent something undesirable), and the universality of taxation, the consequent importance of who makes decisions about it, and the large-scale involvement of Athenian citizens in the running of their state. In the transition from the 5th century to the 4th the Athenians preserved their stability through flexibility, and Lyttkens compares with this the way in which in recent decades Sweden through flexibility has preserved what threatened to become an unviable welfare state.

The book has a glossary, of Greek and of economic terms (the latter could perhaps have been longer, but surprisingly includes *ceteris paribus* and *mutatis mutandis*), endnotes, bibliography and index.

Lyttkens is Swedish, but he writes almost flawless English (and from time to time surprises readers with a light-hearted remark). To a non-economist his economics was intelligible, and seemed realistic about the extent to which the actual behaviour of people departs from economic rationality. His ancient history I think ought to be intelligible to non-classicists. He knows the subject, and recent work on it, fairly well: there are a few slips or dubious details, but they could be corrected without invalidating his main points. In view of his readiness to allow for unintended consequences, I find it surprising that he considers it an intended consequence of Solon's changes that the linking of office-holding to property encouraged rich men to spend lavishly in order to demonstrate their wealth (79–82; he dates the beginnings of what later became the system of liturgies here, but I think few now would accept his guess that Athens already had some triremes this early). Poorer citizens undoubtedly formed the majority of those attending the assembly, but, since there is very little evidence that opinions in the Athenian assembly were divided on class lines, I think it is misleading to claim that in the 5th and 4th centuries "to be successful in the Assembly, a political leader would increasingly have had to advocate measures that benefited the poor majority" (61, repeated later).

Distinctive features of Lyttkens's approach are, for early Greece, an emphasis on the development of states with boundaries, of defined property of individuals within states, and (in a system in which only citizens could own landed property) the need to define who were citizens and were entitled to own landed property; and, throughout Greek history, an insistence that "nothing will change unless there are individuals with an incentive to act" (70; he follows P.B. Manville in arguing that there were many men whose citizenship of Athens might be challenged and who therefore had an incentive to support Cleisthenes' plan to establish a new basis for citizenship). It should now be agreed that, although the Athenians were not sophisticated economists, they did understand some basic economic principles and did sometimes make decisions from economic motives. This book is a sensible and worthwhile exercise in exploring the possibilities.

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I. Mañas Romero, *Pavimentos decorativos de Itálica (Santiponce, Sevilla). Un estudio arqueológico* (BAR-IS, 2081), Oxford: Archaeopress 2010. 234 pp., 122 figs. ISBN 978-1-4073-0480-9.

I. Mañas Romero, *Mosaicos Romanos de Itálica II. Mosaicos contextualizados y apéndice* (Corpus Mosaicos Romanos de España, XIII), Madrid-Sevilla: CSIC & Universidad Pablo de Olavide 2011. 188 pp., 188 figs., 32 colour plates. ISBN 978-84-00-09268-9.

Spain boasts a seemingly inexhaustible reserve of Roman mosaics of great quality, as well as a brisk pace in the work of archaeological excavation and publishing. New discoveries and interesting studies in the field are regularly published. Presented here are two books from 2010 and 2011, which are further contributions to the general picture of a vivid and prolific production.

The mosaics of Itálica constitute the greatest collection of Roman mosaics in *Hispania Antiqua*. The discovery of the site and its enormous amount of material gives an unprecedented opportunity to investigate themes of motifs, fashion, distribution and maybe also the existence of regional workshops. It also provides opportunities for drawing conclusions on location and chronology.

The two books, Mañas/BAR and Mañas/Corpus, are both based on a more extensive thesis on the Roman mosaics of the site by Irene Mañas Romero, defended at the University of Complutense, Madrid (*Pavimentos decorativos de Itálica (Santiponce, Sevilla)*) in 2008. It was written under the tuition of the Corpus project on Roman mosaics of Spain (CMRE) (*Corpus Mosaicos Romanos de España*) at CSIC (Consejo Superior de los Investigaciones Científicas), the Spanish board of scientific research in Madrid.

The original purpose was to present the mosaics *in situ*, together with other contextualized mosaics from the site. This was intended as a complement to the earlier corpus on Itálica, A. Blanco Freijeiro, *Mosaicos romanos de Itálica I. Mosaicos conservados en colecciones públicas y particulares de la ciudad de Sevilla* (*Corpus Mosaicos Romanos de España*, Fasc.II), Madrid 1978, which concerned the non-contextualized mosaics in museums and private collections in Seville, including those preserved only through drawings.

This is an extensive work, not just a compilation; it is a re-evaluation of earlier finds and new research resulting in these two publications, which can be advantageously consulted together, along with the earlier volume by Blanco Freijeiro. The main task was thus to examine several aspects of the mosaics from the viewpoint of the archaeological context. Hence, this is not only a way to delimit the topic; it puts focus on the importance of the location as such, a principal point of reference