

**Manning, Joseph Gilbert. *The open sea: the economic life of the ancient Mediterranean world from the Iron Age to the rise of Rome*. Princeton, 2018. 414p bibl index ISBN 9780691151748, \$35.00; ISBN 9781400890224 ebook, contact publisher for price.**

*The Open Sea* might suggest a treatise on piracy, ocean-going vessels, and containerized freight, or the locus of future political and environmental battles. However, the subtitle ends the suspense. With those cards on the table, Manning (Yale) embarks on an exploration of the history, institutions, economic thought, and political systems of the first millennium BCE. He rejects a belief in only one ancient economy, arguing instead that diversity and cross-cultural social and economic transformations drove pre-modern economic development. His inclusion of Egypt along with Greece and Rome is by itself a valuable addition. The author's scholarly heft will impress and persuade his audience as to the validity and significance of his insights and contributions; 125 pages of endnotes and bibliography buttress his case. His assertions with regard to environmental factors such as climate change, and his treatment of several strictly economic aspects—money, agriculture, and private property—will give some economists pause. But one cannot dismiss this important new book out of hand. Summing Up: Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.