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Autor: Archibald, Zofia H. ; Davies, John; Gabrielsen, Vinvent; Oliv **Precio:** \$622.00

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The economies of classical and Mediterranean antiquity are currently a battleground. Some scholars see them as lively and progressive, even proto-capitalist: others see them as static, embedded in social action and status relationships.

Focusing on the central period of the Mediterranean 330-30 BC, this book contributes substantially to the debate, by juxtaposing general questions of theory and model-building with case-studies which examine specific areas and kinds of evidence.

It breaks new ground by distilling and presenting new and newly-reinterpreted evidence for the Hellenistic era, by opening the debate on how we should replace Rostovtzeff's classic view of this period, and by offering a compelling new set of interpretative ideas to the debate on the ancient economy.