

Even if it is not as mathematical as a standard advanced textbook, it maintains the same rigor and complexity. The volume has a few introductory chapters, covering basic economic tools (production, costs and supply, consumption, industry structure and types of competition, and general equilibrium), and then it goes on developing all the traditional micro and macro theories (public economics, information and risk, capital, money and banking, labor, land and location, cities, natural resources, and growth).

It is not a book about ancient economies, meaning that if one hopes to learn about the economies of ancient civilizations, this is not the place to look. The abundant references though may be of help. The book is about economics. The theories are all modern theories explained in detail, even if those details are alien to ancient times. The justification for this is to see the difference between ancient and modern economies, but the focus of the theories is on the modern ones. I fear that this is a weakness in an otherwise impressive book. Using talents rather than dollars to explain the working of banks is fine, but one is left wishing for more direct and explicit use of the theories in ancient times, when, say, central banks' policies are explained, as central banks, fiat money, and monetary policies are not institutions that resemble some past sort of equivalents.

Despite its only sporadic information about ancient economies, the book is a powerful, even if advanced tool, to develop an understanding of economic theories. A brand new novice to economics may find it daunting. But a non-economist with a solid background of economics may find the prose rigorous and informative. Not a book for everybody, but potentially a great manual for some.