

A Scurrilous Book Review by a Murky Malthusian

Gregory Clark published *A Farewell to Alms, a Brief Economic History of the World* in 2007. He took an extreme Malthusian position, asserting that the average person in 1800 was no better off than such a person in 100,000 BC. He cited no evidence, except a freehand drawing, on page 2, which shows no long-term growth before 1800.

My view is very different. I find per capita income in the West rose threefold between 1000 and 1820 (see *World Economics*, Oct-Dec. 2008). Clark, in the *Journal of Economic History*, December 2009, pp. 1156-61 argues that my views are worthless, asserting that my numbers are “never precisely clear”, and that “all the Maddison estimates for the years before 1820 are fictions, as are many for 1820, 1870 and 1913”. He compares my evidence to that of a medieval fraudster selling fake relics of Jesus. He ends his review by comparing me to an internet crook. This is a scurrilous misrepresentation which has no place in a scholarly journal. Twelve books and many articles of mine, between 1964 and 2007, contain detailed descriptions of my evidence and its coverage over the past four decades.

Clark also alleges that my population figures are shaky because they are “drawn” from McEvedy and Jones’ *Atlas of World Population History*, “which is largely a work of imagination”, a judgement for which he presents no evidence. He chivies me for reliance on their estimates for India. I have a very high regard for their work, which I used selectively. In fact, my early population figures for India were drawn from John Durand, not McEvedy, (see Maddison, 2001, p. 237).

Maddison Sources on GDP Growth in Western Countries

- *Economic Growth in the West*, Norton, New York, 1964
- *Phases of Capitalist Development*, O.U.P, 1982
- *Dynamic Forces in Capitalist Development*, O.U.P, 1991

Maddison Sources on World GDP

- *Monitoring the World Economy, 1820-1992*, OECD, 1995
- *The World Economy, A Millennial Perspective*, OECD, 2001
- *The World Economy, Historical Statistics*, OECD, 2003
- *Growth and Interaction in the World Economy*, American Enterprise Institute, 2005
- *Contours of the World Economy, 1 to 2030 AD*, O.U.P, 2007.
- “*The West and the Rest in the World Economy: 1000-2030, Maddisonian and Malthusian Interpretations*”, *World Economics*, vol 9, October-December, 2008

Maddison Sources on GDP Growth in Non-Western Countries

- *Economic Growth in Japan and the USSR*, Allen and Unwin, 1969
- *Economic Progress and Policy in Developing Countries*, Allen and Unwin, 1970
- *Class Structure and Economic Growth in India and Pakistan*, Allen and Unwin, 1971
- *Poverty, Equity and Growth in Brazil and Mexico*, O.U.P, for World Bank, 1992
- *Chinese Economic Performance in the Long Run 960-2030 AD*, Second edition, OECD, 2007