

College of Business Book Review by Reed A. Roig

Title: “Thog’s Guide to Quantum Economics – 50,000 Years of Accounting Basics for the Future”

Authors: Mike Brown and Zoe-Vonna Palmrose

Publisher: Thogian Press (Through MAC Productions, Duvall, WA)

Length: 256 pages

Price: \$14.95 (paperback through Amazon.com)

Reading time: 5 hours

Reading rating: 8 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 3 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

“Thog’s Guide to Quantum Economics – 50,000 Years of Accounting Basics for the Future” tells the story of a group of scientists struggling to create an economic particle collider to model the development of and activity in any economy. The scientists cross paths with a family of 50,000 year old hunter gatherer bookkeepers (the Thog’s) and gain valuable insights on how to build their collider as they listen to the Thog’s experience in the history of the world’s economic development. An accounting professor (Dr. Z) trying to discover the true meaning of debits and credits also joins the group and learns much about the development of accounting and its role in the world’s economic development (as well as the true meaning of debits and credits - which I won’t give away).

This is a fun book to gain an understanding of the historical transition of economies from hunting and gathering to trading to the development of contracts and currency and eventually to agriculture, manufacturing, banking and stock markets. It also highlights the interrelationship of accounting and economics and the importance of accounting to economic development. In addition, it provides a basic introduction to such economic concepts as game theory and Schumpeterian gales, as well as other more general concepts such as Zipf’s power law.

The Thog’s describe to the scientists and Dr. Z how they lived through the various stages of the world’s economic development and the complications that they endure at each stage. These complications lead the Thog’s to invent the various means resolve the current problems and these inventions ease the transition to the next stage. For example, when the Thog’s discover another tribe and wish to trade mammoth meat with them for fish to improve their diet, the transaction is complicated by timing – when the Thog’s have mammoth meat, the other tribe doesn’t have fish. This leads to the idea of tally sticks, so that the transaction can begin at one time (the delivery of mammoth meat), but be completed at another (the payment in fish). It is inventions such as these that eventually lead to the need for recordkeeping and the development of accounting.

The book also has a political message as it takes numerous pot shots at accounting regulation, fair value accounting, the elimination of pooling, and stock option accounting.

I would recommend this book to anyone struggling with or interested in the “big picture” of accounting. This book provides a perspective of accounting that is often absent from introductory classes and that may allow a student to overcome his or her problems with the details of learning debits and credits. The only significant drawback of the book is the terminology coined by the Thog’s to describe their various inventions - which sometimes confuse the reader. However, the book does include an extensive glossary to assist the reader with that problem.

Reed A. Roig is an Assistant Professor of Accounting in the College of Business at Western Carolina University and a CPA in the State of Ohio. For previously reviewed books visit our Web site at www.wcu.edu/cob/.