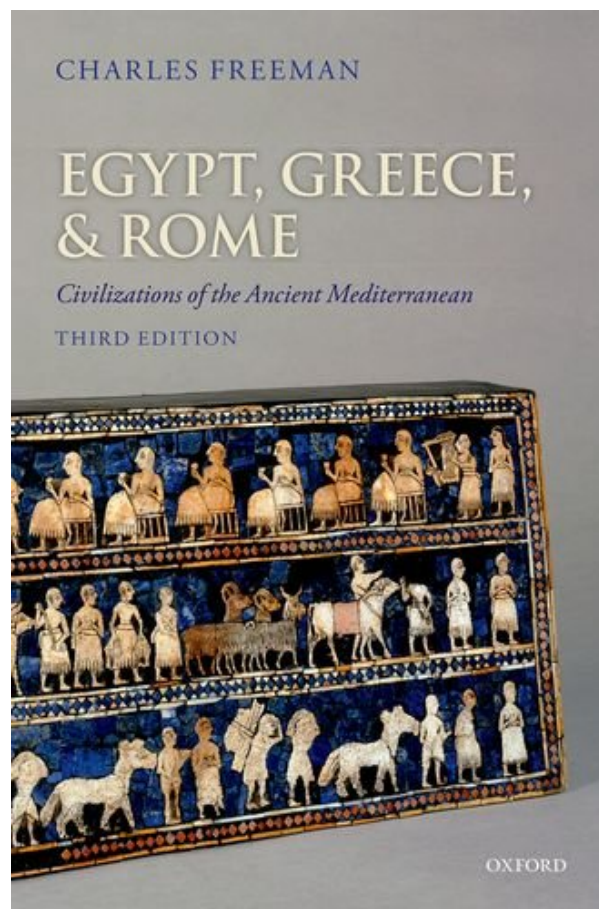


EGYPT, GREECE, AND ROME: CIVILIZATIONS OF THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN BY CHARLES FREEMAN



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CHARLES FREEMAN

EGYPT, GREECE, & ROME

Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean

THIRD EDITION



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Review

Charles Freeman is my favourite universal historian of the ancient world, which he interprets in the broadest geographical and temporal senses ... This new edition of Egypt, Greece, and Rome cannot be recommended too highly as the one-stop shop for all historically curious travellers in these eternally and endlessly fascinating lands. Professor Paul Cartledge, Cambridge University Freeman's survey of the ancient world is a remarkable achievement ... The book is written in a clear and approachable style ideally suited to the target audience, which is defined as the general reader and students in need of a foundation text to guide them into the study of the great and important cultures of antiquity. This new edition will certainly ensure that Freeman's study will continue to hold its place as a classic introduction to the ancient world in all its aspects. Professor Alan B. Lloyd, President of the Egypt Exploration Society This admirably ambitious work provides a very useful introduction to three of the great civilizations of the Ancient World: Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Charles Freeman should be applauded for having taken on this gargantuan task. Professor Richard Miles, University of Sydney Charles Freeman's work on updating this, the third edition of Egypt, Greece and Rome, has ensured this book continues to be a must-read, offering clear insights into the latest thinking and discoveries about the ancient Mediterranean world in an engaging and thought-provoking manner. Dr Michael Scott, University of Warwick an enormously ambitious book ... The text is approachable and readable. It can be used both for sustained study as well as for idle browsing and dipping into. It is informative, succinct. There are no tedious digressions or woolly bits. It offers an opinion where an opinion is useful but does not dogmatically press an agenda. For the general reader, it is difficult to imagine how it could have been better done. Annabel Barber, Blue Guides Freeman is to be commended for the scope and detail of the work ... [it] is beautifully illustrated and written in clear and clever prose. Freeman writes with the authority not only of a historian, but also an archaeologist ... and a traveler who has trod the well-worn paths of our ancient forebears. His rigorous approach ensures that the book will continue to be an authoritative survey of the history and culture of the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions. Carrie L. Sulosky Weaver, The Classical Journal Online

About the Author

Charles Freeman is a freelance academic historian with wide interests in the history of European culture and thought.

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Egypt, Greece, and Rome is regarded as one of the best general histories of the ancient world. It is written for the general reader and the student coming to the subject for the first time and provides a reliable and highly accessible point of entry to the period.

Beginning with the early Middle Eastern civilizations of Sumer, and continuing right through to the Islamic invasions and the birth of modern Europe after the collapse of the Roman empire, the book ranges beyond political history to cover art and architecture, philosophy, literature, society, and economy. A wide range of maps, illustrations, and photographs complements the text.

This third edition has been extensively revised to appeal to the general reader with several chapters completely rewritten and a great deal of new material added, including a new selection of images.

- Sales Rank: #469625 in Books
- Published on: 2014-05-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.20" h x 1.80" w x 9.10" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 784 pages

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Three Stars

By Tasha Jen

boring but needed for class

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

A thoroughly enjoyable and comprehensive overview of ancient western history!

By Brisbane reader

It is surprising Charles Freeman's *Egypt, Greece, & Rome*, now in its third edition, has not yet (09.07.15) received a review so this is but a stopgap till someone does it full justice.

Freeman's *EGR* may be confidently recommended to lovers and readers of ancient (western) history as the currently best first time overview. The subtitle should be noted: "Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean". It does not really give a fully adequate history of Persia, the Middle or Near East, or peripheral regions that interacted with or influenced the civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean (about 127pp to Roebuck's 170pp), but it does have a wonderfully succinct account of ancient Egypt. It is up-to-date with the best contemporary scholarship and historical judgements in its fields esp. archaeology but perhaps not in philosophic scholarship as I explain below. It is readable, well proportioned, and equipped with excellent maps and photographic plates, list of events etc. His historical judgement on men and measures are mostly well balanced and fair minded given the available evidence.

Granted the limitations of space, sometimes I felt a bit more explanation might have been appropriate e.g. to make it clear that Stilicho and Aetius did the best they could in the circumstances, given what they had to work with, to preserve the western Roman Empire. Even JC himself (that's Julius Caesar!) could not have saved the western Roman Empire without sufficient loyal citizen-soldiery (versus effectively foreign mercenaries of late Rome's armies) to do the fighting and money (or booty) to pay them.

EGR has competitors in the field of comprehensive histories of the ancient western world in, amongst others, Nagle's *The Ancient World*, Mathieson's *Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean*, and Starr's *A History of the Ancient World*. Out of print are Sinnigen and Robinson's *Ancient History*, an old classic (way out of

date!) Breasted's Ancient Times, and lastly Roebuck's The World of Ancient Times which is definitely still worth reading. Sound judgements on the major political and military actions are probably the most important feature on an introductory educational work like this. In this Roebuck is just as good despite its age (pub. 1966). If some rising scholar could put out a modern revised edition of Roebuck's classic textbook it would run Freeman very close as the premier recommendation for their target audience.

Freeman's EGR (at 681pp) is also approaching the maximum length such an overview can profitably be without becoming too large and dissuading readers from seeking more expert single civilization history books. (I would suggest about 750-850pp as that mark - Roebuck's is 726pp of text.) Such books might include older well written "popular" histories such as Aldred on Egypt, Burns on Greece, Grant on Rome (and now Potter, Mackay or the forthcoming Beard) as well as older and longer classics such as Bury on Greece and Cary and Scullard on Rome etc. These are unfortunately omitted from the recommended reading despite proven educational merit, presumably on grounds of space or antiquity (and therefore out of date scholarship). This is unfortunate as they are very readable and hit many of the key points that first time learners (and deeper readers too!) need to know.

The one serious omission in this latest revision I would rate to be that of esotericism in philosophy and literature. This is fully explored in Melzer's "Philosophy Between the Lines: The Lost History of Esoteric Writing" (perhaps because our British author tends to defer to the contemporary Oxbridge orthodoxy in philosophy as well as in classics and ancient history).

In sum, a thoroughly enjoyable read (and reread) for the first time and review reader of a comprehensive overview of ancient western history.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Textbook.

By S. Osborn

I ordered this book as it is the primary text for my Ancient Mediterranean History class. It is a very in depth text on the subject and I have found it to be very interesting reading. Well worth the cost.

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