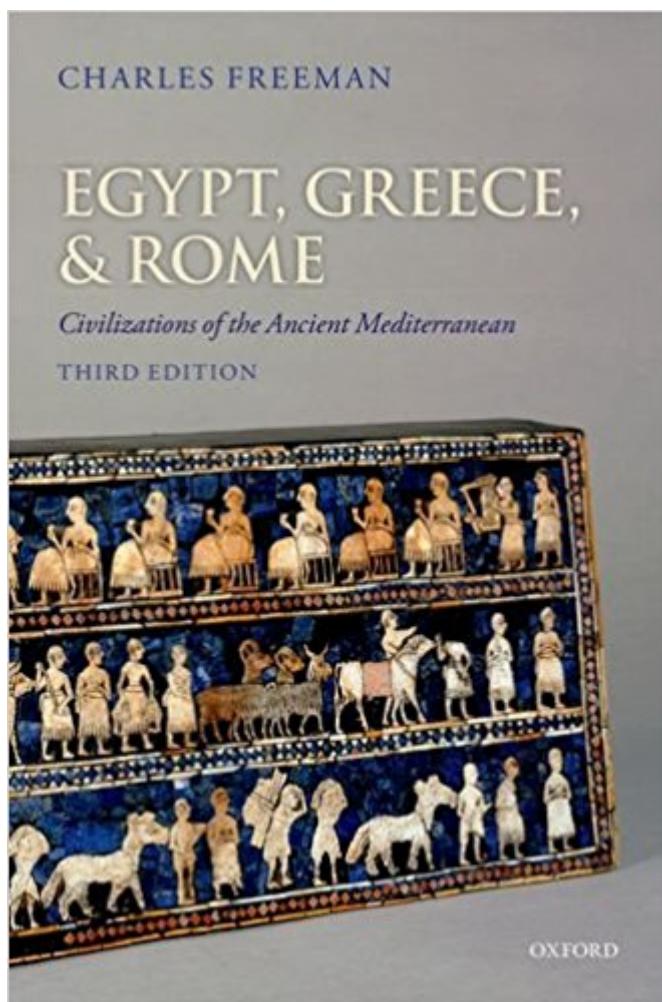


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# Egypt, Greece, And Rome: Civilizations Of The Ancient Mediterranean



## **Synopsis**

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.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

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 \* 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* \* 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 \* 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 \* 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 \* 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 \*

Charles Freeman is a freelance academic historian with wide interests in the history of European culture and thought. In recent years, he has developed a study tour programme of Italy, including Sicily. He has now led twelve tours, the latest to Friuli, with Turin on the schedule for 2013. In 2005 Charles was appointed to the Editorial Board of the *Blue Guides* as Historical Consultant and he has written the historical introductions to several volumes of the new editions including Rome, Florence, Venice, and Mainland Greece. He is also the author of *The Blue Guide Sites of Antiquity: Fifty Sites that Explain the Classical World* (2009) which has been widely praised.

I had this as a textbook for History-325, it was able to answer maybe 5% of the questions posed by the syllabus, Freeman is opinionated, shows his leanings early in the book and hard to follow as he jumps out of chronology for literary effect. Freeman also makes comparisons outside out fields of expertise as he tends to draw ties to the past with studies he is not trained in. Its a good read if you are not pressed for time, I wasn't impressed the kindle version's, limited "copy and paste" abilities, when trying to quoted or cite the textbook. If you're not required to purchase this, I would recommend a pass on it.

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.

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.

Note: this review is based on the 2nd Edition of the book. A long, long time ago I used to want to be an archaeologist. Other profession(s) were in store for me forever so I left the world of history to my early studies and free time reading. It was for this purpose I picked this book up. Truth be told, I'm not sure why I did as I (thought I) had a pretty good understanding of the Ancient Mediterranean world. This book forced me to rethink that opinion. Freeman starts with the building blocks of the great civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean. From there he builds a fully fleshed out picture for each of the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations. While the level of depth is never massive at the same time it is never overwhelming either. Important topics or concepts are covered in more depth, but many centuries of history pass by at a brisk pace. That being said, he still finds time to dwell on the everyday occurrences of the ancient Mediterranean and create a sense of connection between the reader and these ancient peoples. And this is where the book's strength really lies. He's able to weave a history that covers minutia and items of great importance into a flowing coherent story to present the idea of a people slowly evolving with time and each other. For an introductory work of this type...the read was excellent.

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