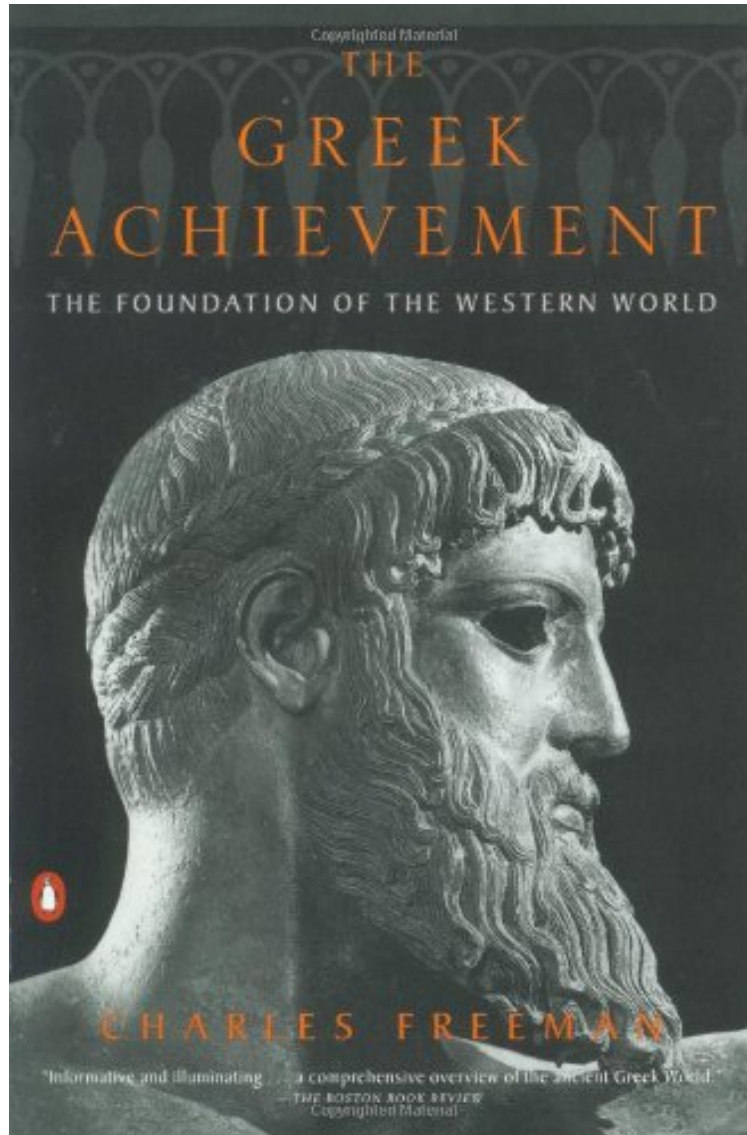


(Read download) The Greek Achievement: The Foundation of the Western World

The Greek Achievement: The Foundation of the Western World

Charles Freeman

**Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1001366 in Books 2000-09-01 2000-09-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.01 x 1.14 x 6.021, 1.28
#File Name: 014029323X544 pages | File size: 75.Mb

Charles Freeman : The Greek Achievement: The Foundation of the Western World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Greek Achievement: The Foundation of the Western World:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By JC Desmond If you love ancient History, mythology; then this is a must read. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Decent book By Tenshi The Greek Achievement by Charles Freeman portrays a unique perspective on Greek history by explaining its many

accomplishments, along with much criticism as well. Although Freeman explains much of the splendor of the Greeks, he seems to focus on criticizing the Greeks for their faults, and seemed to spend more time searching for faults rather than giving credit where it is due. Although the author seems to elaborate on the negative aspects of Greek history, it seems that he does this with excellence, because it demonstrates a great contrast to traditional praise of Greek achievements by use of valid evidence. 21 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Surprisingly ReadableBy R. Whitelaw Confession time. I expected this book to really put me to sleep. So why did I buy it? Well.... the recent release of the movie "Troy" peaked my interest in the classical world, so here I am. But surprise, I found myself captivated with this discussion of the Greek world. If you have any interest in the classical world, this would be a great place to start. Now I know a little something about boring history books. I majored in history and even taught it at the high school level for a short time. Trust me, I have shelves full of stinky, boring required reading from my college days and from later attempts to look deeper into specific historical topics. This was a breath of fresh air. If you have ever had to read some of the other required classic reading (IE: Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, etc.) this will serve as an excellent work to enhance what you got out of those folks. And let's be honest, anyone who has actually read all of Euripides has got to admit that having something like this work to gain better understanding is a good thing! Now, let's get it in perspective. This work covers a monumental period of time. If you're looking for in-depth works on the Hellenistic period or any other particular period of Greek/Classical history - this is likely not for you. However, if what you're looking for is something to cover all the key waypoints of Greek civilization, this is the place to be.

Charles Freeman's *The Greek Achievement* traces the entire course of ancient Greek history across thousands of years--from the Mycenaean and Minoan civilizations of the Bronze Age through the Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. This brilliant account celebrates the incredible range of Greek achievement: the architectural marvels of the Athenian Acropolis; the birth of drama and the timeless tragedies of Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles; Homer's epics; the philosophical revolutions of Plato and Aristotle; and the conquests of Alexander the Great. Lavishly illustrated with photographs and maps, *The Greek Achievement* paints a sweeping panorama of the ancient Greeks' world and provides a rich, contemporary overview of their enduring contribution to world civilization.

.com The idea of an entity called Greece is a modern one, which a Thracian of Homer's time or an Athenian of the age of Pericles would not have recognized. Ancient Greek politics was organized along the lines first of family, then of clan, then of neighborhood, and then finally of town or city; the concept of nationhood, the existence of a nation called Greece, scarcely entered the discussion. But if there was no Greece in ancient times, there is more than one ancient Greece. One, writes the noted classical historian Charles Freeman, can be found symbolized in the Parthenon of Athens, its graceful architecture and statuary bespeaking ideals of freedom, citizenship, truth. But another, Freeman continues, can be found early in the pages of Thucydides, who writes of, among other atrocities, the Athenians' slaughtering the citizens of Melos upon their surrender after a long siege. "Whatever the achievements of the Greeks might have been," he writes, "they developed against the backdrop of a real world, one in which human beings were degraded by disease and where brutality was an everyday part of life." Freeman traces both the real and the ideal Greek world in this comprehensive survey of ancient history, which opens with an up-to-date assessment of the Greek peninsula's Bronze Age cultures and closes with a view of the survival of classical customs and ways of thought in the Western tradition. Gracefully written, Freeman's fine history will find a welcome place on classicists' bookshelves. -- Gregory McNamee From Publishers Weekly These are not your grandfather's Greeks, flawless creators of a world where, as Freeman writes, "the marble is always shining, the streets are clean, and there is a lot of time for passionate philosophical discussions about art, theater, or the meaning of life." Greek civilization was often bloody and brutal, sustained by conquest, slavery and the subjugation of women. Nonetheless, in demythologizing Greek civilization, Freeman (Egypt, Greece and Rome, etc.) clarifies its extraordinary achievements. His story stretches from the Mycenaeans (circa 1500 B.C.) to the late Hellenistic period (fourth century A.D.), exploring the enormous achievements of the archaic period on which the classical era was built, as well as the previously undervalued Hellenistic era. It's a difficult, complex story that highlights multiple cultural borrowings and transformations as often as it celebrates pure inventions. Drawing on archeology and literature, Freeman expertly illuminates the nature of Greek life. His main thrust is an integrated account that uses the evolving background of everyday concerns, class conflicts and external threats to make sense of Greek culture. He points out the spots where his story is necessarily speculative, and he usually offers competing viewpoints. Chapters focus on such issues as Athenian democracy, drama and philosophy, and Hellenistic science, mathematics and medicine. As a lively survey of a past civilization and the present's debt to it, this is on a par with Thomas Cahill's successful *Hinges of History* series (*The Gifts of the Jews*, etc.). But Freeman is a more rigorous historian than Cahill, and he never lets enthusiasm obscure the distinction between fact and myth, between events and their interpretation. Illustrations, maps. (Aug.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s British historian Freeman (*The Ancient Greeks*, 1996) offers a thoughtful, limpidly written survey of the history and cultural achievements of the ancient Greeks, not only during the usually celebrated classical period but throughout the period from 1500 b.c. to the onset of Christianity in the late Roman

Empire. How should we regard ancient Greece? Was it the cradle of democracy and civilization symbolized by the shining marble Parthenon, or was the reality less noble, even nasty and violent? Both images have elements of truth, Freeman argues: "the Greeks provided the chromosomes of Western civilization" yet depended on slave labor and marginalized women. He addresses both sides of this paradox: Greek natural philosophy, mathematics, ethics, medicine, poetry, and drama laid the foundations for the sciences and humanities, but Greek city-states seemed constantly at war. Greeks regarded foreigners as barbarians, and Greek political thought failed to develop a theory of human rights. Freeman intersperses brief looks at the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, and the works of Aristophanes and Euripides, with short studies of Greek land use and the role of women and slaves in Greek society. He also traces the turbulent history of Greece's evolution from a collection of maritime city-states finding its identity through resistance to Persia, through its consolidation under Macedonian tyrants Philip and Alexander the Great, to its status as a province of the Roman Empire. Though Alexander was a civilized Greek, his conquests were brutal in the extreme and brought little benefit to the peoples he subjugated, Freeman asserts. Once his empire crumbled, Greece was absorbed into the Roman Empire (Greek influence on Roman culture, of course, was enormous). Freeman covers vast ground in this relatively short account, which results in some oversimplification. However, he laudably emphasizes the lasting accomplishments of Greece's vibrant civilization without idealizing it. Engaging, well-researched, and a good introduction to ancient Greece for the general reader. -- Copyright 1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.