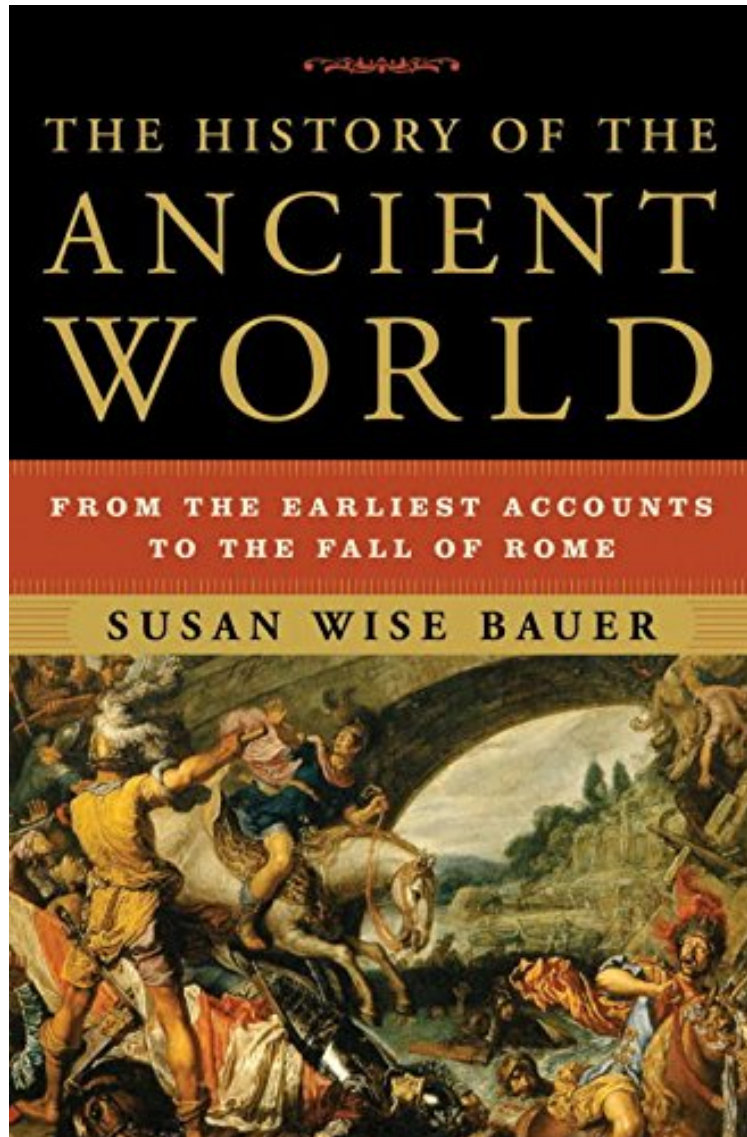


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The History of the Ancient World: From the Earliest Accounts to the Fall of Rome

Susan Wise Bauer

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A lively and engaging narrative history showing the common threads in the cultures that gave birth to our own. This is the first volume in a bold new series that tells the stories of all peoples, connecting historical events from Europe to the Middle East to the far coast of China, while still giving weight to the characteristics of each country. Susan Wise Bauer provides both sweeping scope and vivid attention to the individual lives that give flesh to abstract assertions about human history. Dozens of maps provide a clear geography of great events, while timelines give the reader an ongoing sense of the passage of years and cultural interconnection. This old-fashioned narrative history employs the methods of history from beneath literature, epic traditions, private letters and accounts to connect kings and leaders with the lives of those they ruled. The result is an engrossing tapestry of human behavior from which we may draw conclusions about the direction of world events and the causes behind them. 13 illustrations, 80 maps

From Publishers Weekly Bauer (author of the four-volume *The Story of the World: History for the Classical Child*) guides readers on a fast-paced yet thorough tour of the ancient worlds of Sumer, Egypt, India, China, Greece, Mesopotamia and Rome. Drawing on epics, legal texts, private letters and court histories, she introduces individuals who lived through the famines, plagues, floods, wars and empire building of the ancient world: the marvelous array of characters includes Gilgamesh, Sumer's first epic hero; Y, the founder of the Xia dynasty in China; and Tiglath-Pileser III, who restored the Assyrian empire's fortunes. Because Bauer covers so much time and territory, she focuses on the Western cultures with which she seems most comfortable; the chapters on Asia and India are the least developed. In addition, some of her assertions for instance, that the biblical book of Joshua is the clearest guide we possess to the establishment of an Israelite kingdom in Canaan contradict general scholarly opinion or are simply wrong. However, Bauer's elegant prose and her command of much of the material makes this a wonderful starting point for the study of the ancient world. 80 maps. (Feb.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist Bauer's annals, which span the millennia between the traces of Sumer and the Roman emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 312 CE, are an attractive introduction to a subject vast in time and geography. She writes briskly and interpretively, and is attuned throughout to the challenge of rulers: appearing to the ruled as legitimate holders of power. This sensibility makes her narratives acutely interesting, as Bauer pierces the biases inherent in most ancient sources to discern the sincerity or the cynicism with which power seekers pursued their goals. Above, approval of the divine was invaluable; on Earth, a loyal army was indispensable. Acquiring both enabled lawgivers to make their writ stick, and Bauer's chronicles exhibit the interaction of priestly, military, and legal powers as empires and dynasties wax and wane. This endows continuity to her accounts of polities as disparate as the Harappan civilization of the Indus River or the states that emerged from misty prehistory along the Yellow and Yangtze rivers to form China. Nonacademic and sometimes colloquial in composition, Bauer's survey will spark the imagination. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved

About the Author Susan Wise Bauer is an educator and academic who has worked with parents and students for more than twenty years. She taught at the College of William Mary in Virginia for fifteen years. Her previous best-selling titles for Norton include *The Well-Trained Mind*, *The Well-Educated Mind*, *The Story of Western Science*, and the *History of the World* series.