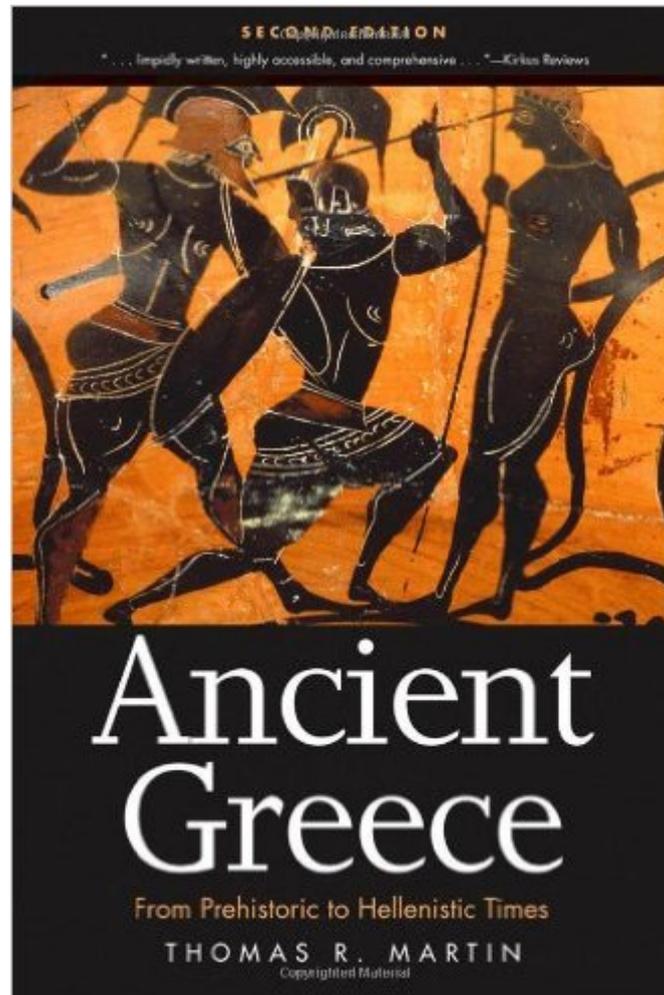


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# Ancient Greece: From Prehistoric To Hellenistic Times, Second Edition



## Synopsis

In this compact yet comprehensive history of ancient Greece, Thomas R. Martin brings alive Greek civilization from its Stone Age roots to the fourth century B.C. Focusing on the development of the Greek city-state and the society, culture, and architecture of Athens in its Golden Age, Martin integrates political, military, social, and cultural history in a book that will appeal to students and general readers alike. Now in its second edition, this classic work now features new maps and illustrations, a new introduction, and updates throughout. A limpidly written, highly accessible, and comprehensive history of Greece and its civilizations from prehistory through the collapse of Alexander the Great's empire. . . . A highly readable account of ancient Greece, particularly useful as an introductory or review text for the student or the general reader. "Kirkus Reviews" A polished and informative work that will be useful for general readers and students. "Daniel Tompkins, Temple University

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you don't know much about ancient Greek history or culture, this is the best short book I know of. On every page, in every sentence, the author gets straight to the point, with no fancy obfuscations, assuming no prior knowledge. I've never seen a better organized history of ancient Greece. Besides that, I strongly approve of the map selection and the timelines. He gives just enough depth to be a solid introduction--just a little bit more than "what you're supposed to know." Some teachers I know prefer a book titled "Ancient Greece" written by a team of authors led by Sarah Pomeroy. It has just a bit more depth than this book, but it isn't nearly as well written. It seems that they wanted it to be

easily comprehensible, but I'm not sure they succeeded. It does have the advantage of a little more depth, but if you're reading for pleasure, I recommend this one rather than that one. It is, though, only an introduction; that's the obvious downside of being short. You might want more information about the culture: more excerpts from the poets, the thoughts of the philosophers described in more detail, more plates (or plates in color) about the art. Actually the book is amply illustrated in black and white. But of course a book dedicated to Greek culture would have better information on any of these aspects, and that would be a book worth reading. This one serves only as an introduction. I strongly recommend reading the Norton Critical Editions of the Iliad and Odyssey, Hesiod, a couple famous tragedies (in my opinion, Euripides' Medea is the one to read first), and a few of Plato's more famous dialogues. THAT is an introduction; but if that's the kind of thing you intend to do, this book will be a great place to start. On the historical/political/social matters, this book is again a great introduction, but only an introduction. If you want more detailed information, especially a look at the reasons historians believe such and such happened, I very strongly recommend John V. A. Fine's "The Ancient Greeks," one of the very best history books I've ever read. Of course it's a lot longer, but it's worth it. Once again, if you're reading for pleasure, I recommend this one first, and then Fine's book, which is a bit harder to follow. If you want to read about Greek religion, I would once again start here; but then you should read the classic, Walter Burkert's book, and follow it up with Jan Bremmer's book, both titled "Greek Religion." Of course, why not a little cheerleading for learning about ancient Greece? Since the Renaissance and even more since the Victorian era, anyone in the West who would call themselves educated has had to have basic knowledge of ancient Greece. They were certainly very influential on Western culture, and via Bactria even had some considerable influence on East Asia. I've found that Greek history somehow arouses more curiosity in students than modern European or American history. I think it's because of the nature of the ancient Greeks themselves, because they reflected on human nature via their own history, so as we study ancient Greece, we get to reflect on the nature of power, why governments take forms such as aristocracies or democracies or monarchies, why wars are won or lost, why empires rise and fall, how much blood and misery flow through history, and so on. Students don't merely have to memorize lists of events and prepared ideas, but they get to reflect about life, why the world is the way it is, for themselves. And that is what most people, young or old, are all about.

Thomas Martin has provided the general reader with an excellent historical survey of ancient Greece, which emphasizes not only the political history, but also the cultural and social developments through the ages. The purpose of this work is to give the reader a brief overview, and

then to allow him/her to choose what topics to study in more detail. In this regard, "Ancient Greece" does a brilliant job. In this situation, having a good bibliography is critical, and "Ancient Greece" does not fail. In my opinion, the annotated bibliography at the end of the book is quite extensive and was designed for the general reader in mind. Thus, given this excellent feature of the book, the author effectively designed this book for a general audience. Additionally, I thought that the timelines and maps that were provided in the book were outstanding aids in helping to learn the material in the text. Hooray for Thomas Martin!

The best history book I've ever read! Designed as an overview for students, this book is highly readable and contains useful timelines, maps, plans, and photographs, which clarify the narrative even further, making it a perfect choice for the general reader. Mr. Martin begins with a prehistory of late Stone Age activity that provides background for the conditions of later Greek life. He then describes the civilizations of the Minoans on the island of Crete and of their successors, the Mycenaeans, on the mainland; the Greek Dark Age and the Archaic Age; the Classical Age of Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.; the transformation of the kingdom of Macedonia into the greatest power in the Greek world; and the period after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., when monarchies emerging from Alexander's fragmented empire once again came to dominate Greek history. This book would be great background reading for those parents who homeschool their children according to a "classical" approach. If any one who has read this book knows of another history book (any period) which equals this one in appeal, please email me and tell me about it!

This book is not meant to be an in-depth telling of all the complex intrigue and implication of ancient Greece, but rather a chance for one to "get their feet wet" and have a basic understanding of how ancient Greece evolved and influenced ancient civilization, which is exactly what I was looking for. I finished this book, and have since moved on to 'Ancient Rome' by Simon Baker, which is similar in format and goal. After reading his I no longer feel as much 'in the dark' as I used to about ancient Western civilization history. I hope to find similar books about the Middle Ages and Renaissance next.

This is the book that aroused my interest in ancient Greek history. I've read a lot of general histories, and most are tough to endure. Not this one. Filled with helpful chronological charts, maps, organized headings, and clear and succinct prose -- this book conveys the ancient Greek

experience in a little over 200 pages. Trust me, if you want to begin your study of the ancient Greeks (or reinforce and give context to what you already know about the Greeks) read this book.

Dr. Martin writes a very clear and concise work on Ancient Greece. His use of pictures and timelines throughout the chapters greatly aids in the reader's understanding of Greece's History. He proposes his own ideas and backs them up well with archaeology and primary texts while still leaving room for the reader to think for his/herself. I highly recommend this book to anyone looking for a knowledgeable understanding of the ancient world.

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