
This offering from Oxford University Press is a reissue in paperback of Volume 1 of the *Oxford History of the Classical World*, first published in two paperback volumes in 1986 and one hardback volume in 1988. Apart from a new cover and the change in the book’s title, this new issue is identical in all respects to the 1986 paperback volume.

The book consists of a series of chapters by respected scholars in their respective fields, covering the time from the emergence of archaic Greek society down to the conquest of the Hellenistic kingdoms by Rome. The chapters themselves deal with such areas as ‘Greece: The History of the Archaic Period’, ‘Homer’, ‘Greek Religion’ and ‘Hellenistic Philosophy and Science’, to sample a few at random. The chapters are conveniently and logically arranged in a broadly chronological order: an historical overview of a certain period is then followed by articles describing the art, literature, philosophy and religion of that period. This arrangement has the advantage of allowing the reader to gain a broad perspective of the subject or alternatively to concentrate on those chapters dealing with philosophy, art, or whatever is the reader’s particular interest. Each chapter is a valuable scholarly work in its own right, constituting both a fine introduction to its topic for the layperson as well as, at many points, food for thought for the scholar. The illustrations consist of numerous high quality monochrome photographs, supplemented by nine colour plates and six maps, effectively and attractively illustrating the text.

Indeed, as a general introduction to the culture and achievements of the Greek and Hellenistic worlds it would be difficult to better this volume, apart from the absence of scholarly contributions of the last fifteen years. The emphasis on literature, art and philosophy is strong, both in the number and the individual strength of the chapters dealing with these topics. The chapters take, broadly speaking, a conservative and fairly representative viewpoint of their subject matter, allowing the reader to gain a basic appreciation of the state of scholarship in a given area.
The major weakness of this volume is in the area of narrative history, which is perhaps surprising given the title. A full treatment of the history of the period is almost entirely absent. Some of the historical chapters do provide a basic outline of events: the chapter on the history of the Hellenistic period by Simon Price, however, while an admirable study of the trends and issues of the period, has virtually no narrative or chronological framework. A reader expecting a comprehensive treatment of Greek and Hellenistic history, which he or she might reasonably expect from the book's title, is likely to be disappointed.

That said, the book does represent good value as an erudite introduction to the impressive cultural achievements of Greece and the Hellenistic world. Perhaps a different title would more accurately represent what the book actually is: nonetheless, a reader wishing to go beyond a mere list of facts and come to a better understanding of the cultural accomplishments of the Greek and Hellenistic civilisations would find this volume a worthwhile acquisition.

Gary Young
University of Auckland