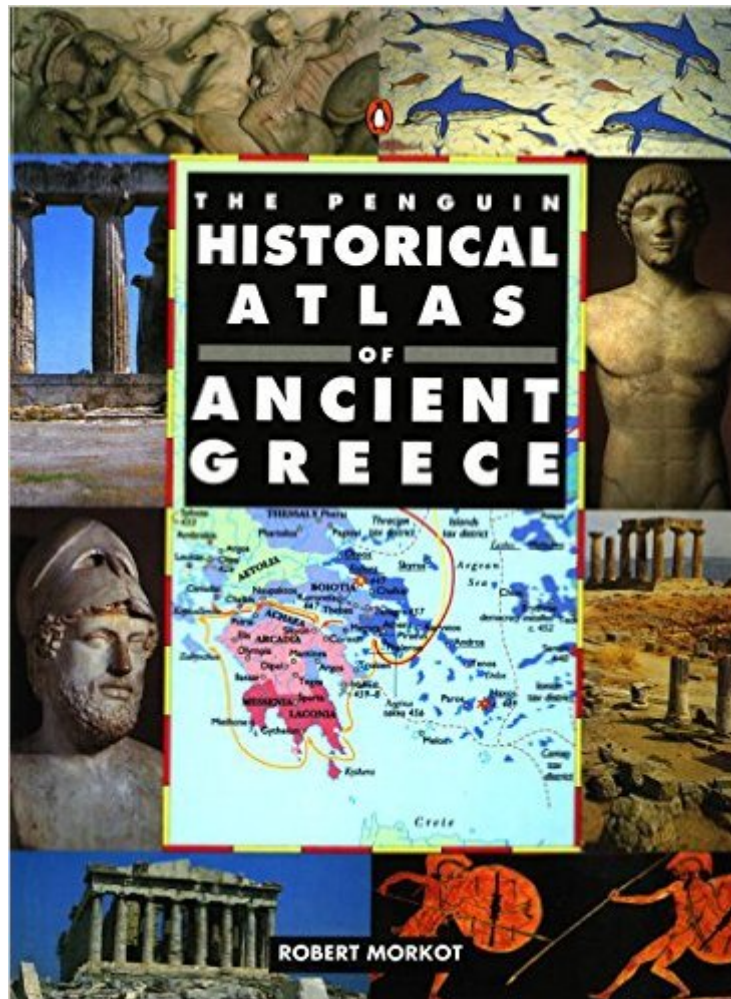


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The Penguin Historical Atlas Of Ancient Greece



Synopsis

The cradle of Western civilisation, Ancient Greece was a land of contradictions and conflict. Intensely quarrelsome and competitive, the Greek city-states consistently proved unwilling and unable to unite. Yet, in spite of or even because of this internal discord, no ancient civilization proved so dynamic or productive. The Greeks not only colonized the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas but set standards of figurative art that endured for nearly 2500 years. Charting topics as diverse as Minoan civilization, The Persian Wars, the Athenian Golden Age and the conquests of Alexander the Great, the book traces the development of this creative and restless people and assesses their impact not only on the ancient world but also on our own attitudes and environment. The authoritative narrative, illustrated with over sixty full colour maps and over seventy plates, makes this an indispensable handbook for history students and enthusiasts alike.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This superficially attractive book should be approached carefully. The author makes several strong, yet unsupported statements in an attempt to minimize the effect of Classical Greece on western civilization. It is refreshing to see a different viewpoint. However, the book has no references; only further readings. Had I not been exposed to other viewpoints before reading this book, I would walk away thinking the Athenian contribution to Western philosophy, arts, architecture, letters, etc., was rather inconsequential and evolutionary in nature (rather than revolutionary as it is customarily accepted). There is nothing wrong with a new point of view. But, if it is radical, it should be supported (via references, etc.) -- otherwise, it is suspect. An example of this is the statement (p. 93)

that an exquisite ivory carving of Philip II "a little over three centimetres in height ... belies Demosthenes' claim that the Macedonians were 'barbarians'". In the same paragraph we hear that Philip employed many Greeks at his court, including Aristotle. Could it be possible that the barbarian conqueror, Phillip, surrounded himself with the beauty of the world he conquered? Readers exposed to the beauty of Classical Greek thought and art are left wondering about the motives (or background) of this author who chooses to focus on the political, military, and perhaps greedy aspects of Greek civilization, while completely ignoring its more noble contributions to Western thought. Perhaps the book balances the opposite tendency, i.e., to focus on the marvels of Greek Arts, and disregard the support environment that provided the safety and affluence for Greek Arts to flourish.

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